AFTER THE
BATTLE
ELIU·1945·IWO·JIMA·OKINAWA ⚔ KOREA·1950·
⚔REVOLUTIONARY·WAR·1775–1783 ⚔ FRENCH·NAVAL·WAR·1798–1801⚔
UNCOMMON
VALOR
WAS A COMMON
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IWO
JIMA
Number 82

AFTER THE BATTLE

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Front Cover: The Marine Corps Memorial in Washington by Felix W. de Weldon symbolises the battle for Iwo Jima. Dedicated in November 1954, it was photographed for us by Rudi Vetter, an ex-WWII US Navy photographer, who was present in 1945 when the original Joe Rosenthal picture which inspired the memorial was processed on Guam.

Centre: The flag was raised on this spot on the top of Mount Surabachi. A US Coast Guard surveys the island shortly before the last American personnel on Iwo Jima were withdrawn in October 1993.

Back Cover *Top:* The Stars and Stripes were raised on the rim of the crater four days after the Marines landed: Don Marshall (*inset*) went in with the first wave.

Bottom: Comparison in 1993. Don Marshall reflects on a battle won, and friends lost, yet not forgotten.

Acknowledgements: The Editor is indebted to Lieutenant Markus Dausses without whom our story of Iwo Jima could not have been completed. We wish him well on his next assignment with the UN enforcing Iraqi sanctions in the Middle East.

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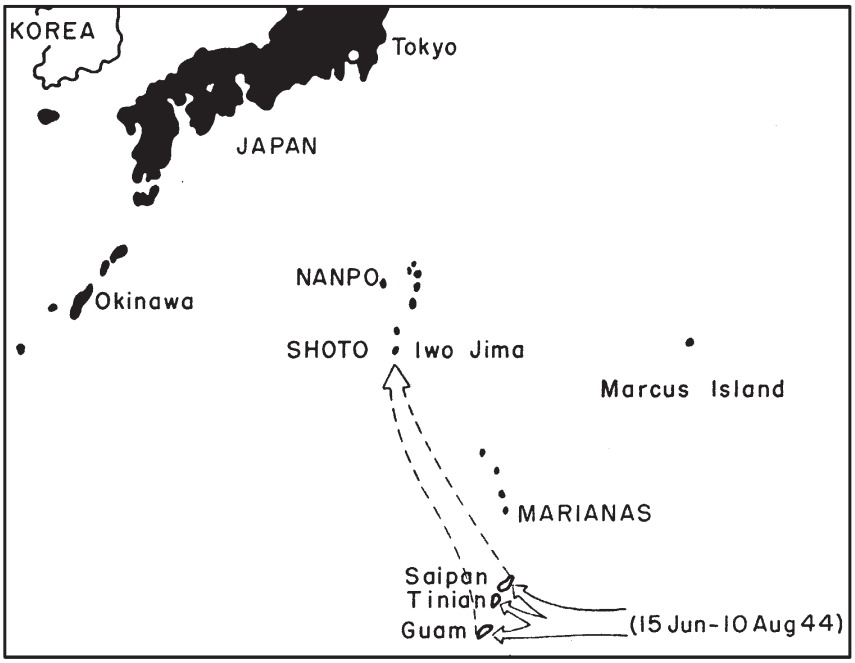
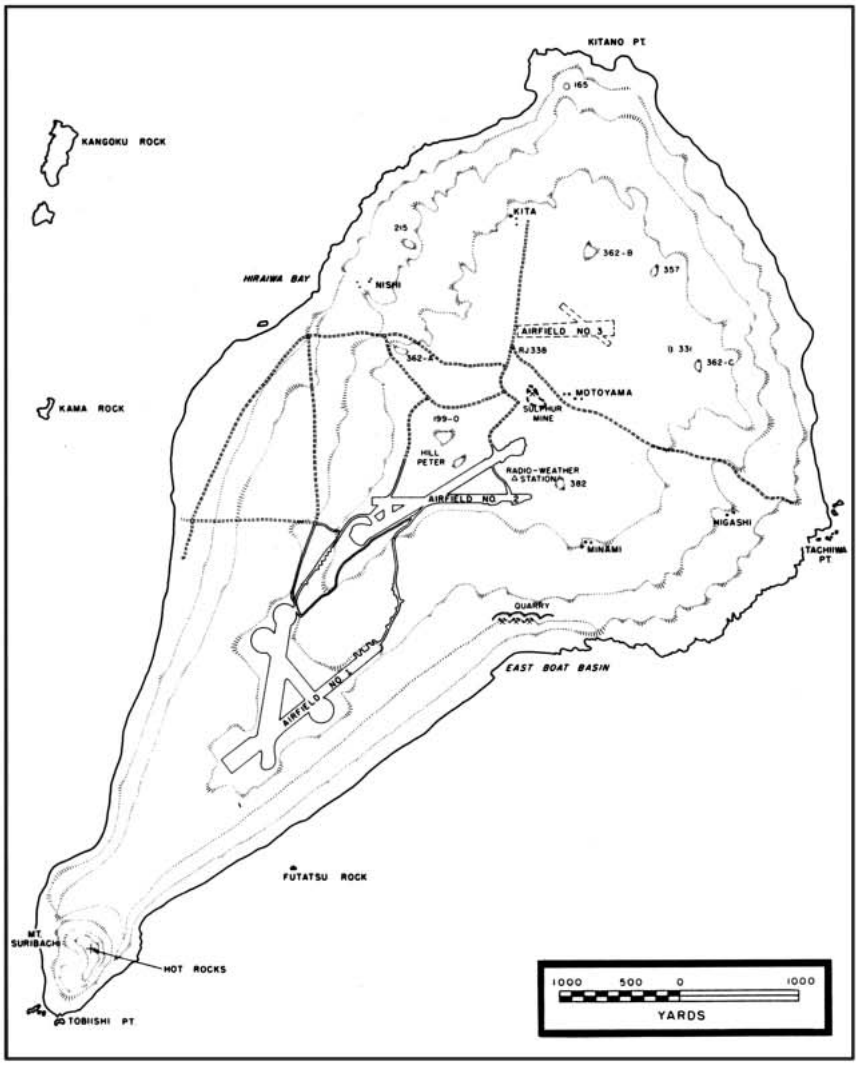


Iwo Jima — dubbed 'Sulphur Island' by an English explorer in 1673 — is one of the Kazan Retto (Volcano Islands) lying some 700 miles south of Tokyo. Just over 4½ miles long and varying from half a mile to 2½ miles wide, in 1944 Iwo had an area of just 7½ square miles. 'Economically insignificant as to be largely unknown even to the Japanese,' as the Marine Corps historian succinctly put it, its position gave it a 'strategic importance of such magnitude that it became the most heavily fortified and stubbornly defended real estate in the Pacific'.



IWO JIMA

By Don Marshall

General Kuribayashi, through brilliant strategy, precise planning and total devotion to a cause already lost, would convert a mere eight-square-mile piece of rock sitting in the vast Pacific mid-way between Saipan and Tokyo into an almost impregnable fortress destined to stand alone in a 36-day battle. America's combined force of 8 battleships, 12 escort carriers, 19 cruisers and 44 destroyers pounded this insignificant dot in the ocean with thousands of tons of high explosives. Behind this formidable force of warships carrying men and materials of war, lay 43 transports, 63 LSTs (Landing Ship, Tank), 31 LSMs (Landing Ship, Mechanised), backed-up by more carriers and transports crammed with fighting Marines and Navy/Army garrison personnel. The entire armada consisted of 800 ships and almost a quarter of a million men.

Kuribayashi, a clever and resourceful general, realised his transfer to Iwo Jima, a Prefecture of Tokyo considered little more than a speck of dust on Japan's doorstep, marked his Empire's last-ditch effort to protect the homeland. He sensed, also, that it marked the end of the line for him, an assignment from which he would not survive.

Little fanfare greeted Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi's arrival on Iwo Jima in May 1944. Much to his dismay, jealous rivalry between the island's fanatic Army and Navy officers had negated all progress toward fortifying Iwo against enemy attack. The Army insisted upon one type of defensive position and the Navy another. Work ordered done by one faction was demanded undone by the other.

Within six months, this strong-willed, dedicated man ended the jealous bickering, moulded the two warring military bodies into an extremely effective fighting force and dispelled his troop's pre-conceived notions of glorious, suicidal, Banzai charges against an invading enemy.

Top: **An airfield had been constructed on Iwo Jima before the war by the Japanese at Chidori (called Airfield No. 1 by the Americans) which was enlarged in 1943, and a second airfield (Motoyama) in the centre of the island became operational the following year. The existence of these airfields, plus a third under construction to the north, made Iwo an irresistible attraction to American planners seeking a forward base for fighters to escort the B-29s currently operating from Tinian and Guam against the Japanese homeland. Losses over Japan and on the long homeward flight were high and an intermediate base would not only provide protection en route but serve also as an emergency landing field for crippled 'Superforts'. (NASM)**

Above: **Fifty years later, Iwo Jima remains an important link in the Pacific route to Japan. The American occupation forces developed all three airfields, North, Central and South, although in later years the central airfield at Motoyama was enlarged into a major base to the exclusion of the other two fields. Iwo Jima was handed back to Japan in 1968 whereupon the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) took over operation of the airfield leaving the US Coast Guard LORAN C station as the sole permanent American presence on the island. Now — in November 1993 — that final link with the events of 1945 has been broken with the transfer of the LORAN installation to the Japanese Maritime Safety Agency. (Marty Black)**

The most prominent geographical feature on Iwo Jima is Mount Suribachi — an active volcano, which last erupted in 1727, at the southern tip of the pork chop-shaped island. 'Suribachi' is Japanese for 'mortar' — so named because of its shape like a bowl used to grind grains into powder — but taking on an entirely new meaning during the battle when it was pounded by bomb and shell. Also, as we shall see, the capture of Mount Suribachi was to provide one of the most well-known and lasting images of the Second World War. (NASM)

The commander surveyed his tiny domain from 556 feet above sea level atop the barren, dormant volcano, Mount Suribachi. He noted a narrow, three mile neck of land connecting this highest point on the island to a bulbous, flat-topped, active volcano rising 382 feet to the north ... the little village of Motoyama roosted precariously on its steaming, cave-dotted, sulphuric summit. Turning eastward, the General focused his attention along the length of deep water gently lapping against a sandy, 3,600 to 4,000 yard stretch of beach. The narrow neck of land separated it from a shallow-water, shorter strand of beach to the west.

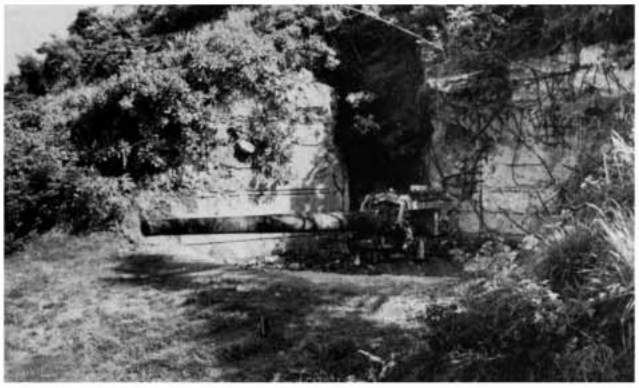
Kuribayashi laid his plans to fortify Iwo against an eastwardly invasion of enemy forces. He planned to fight a battle of delay and attrition, one in which his troops would remain concealed, their guns silent as the enemy crammed the beach with tanks, trucks and supplies. By using his men and material sparingly, Kuribayashi determined he could hold superior forces indefinitely at bay. By the summer of 1944, many Japanese commanders would no longer permit their troops a courageous Banzai suicide. Like Colonel Nakagawa in the battle for Peleliu in September 1944 (see *After the Battle* No. 78), Kuribayashi was of the opinion that such foolish tactics had already cost Japan enough ground.

Kuribayashi committed his officers, regardless of rank, to a pledge of blind obedience, then immediately shipped all dissenters and civilians home. His forces ultimately consisted of the 9th through the 12th Independent Anti-Tank Battalions, the 309th, 311th, 312th and 314th Infantry Battalions, the 5th Anti-Aircraft Unit, the 145th Infantry Regiment, portions of the 2nd Mixed Brigade, the 204th Naval Construction Battalion, the 26th Tank Regiment, the 21st Special Machine Cannon Unit and the 2nd Mixed Brigade Field Hospital ... a total of 22,000 men.

He ordered the little village of Motoyama dismantled for much-needed building supplies. His troops dug connecting tunnels from Mount Suribachi to the former site of Motoyama. Underground billeting, headquarters and hospitals began to take shape. Rifle pits exposed muzzles only. Rocks, ravines and shadowy terrain camouflaged deep-burrowed, heavy guns. At no time would he unnecessarily expose his men to the enemy.

Work proceeded at a furious pace. Engineers laid out blueprints for an underground level, then immediately superimposed connecting tunnels above and below. By autumn, workers had completed more than 16 miles of tunnels that interlocked caves, pillboxes and blockhouses. One 540-yard-long tunnel near Chidori Airfield ran 32 feet deep with 17 entrances. Another tunnel stretched 800 yards with nearly all of its 14 entrances connected to huge blockhouses and pillboxes. The General personally inspected his fortifications, sighting each slit and opening with a nearby guard's rifle or an officer's swagger stick to test its

Today the island is a shrine to the 20,000 Japanese who died in its defence. Exclusively a military base, no civilian visitors are allowed other than veterans of the battle and, now that the weekly US Coast Guard flight has ceased, it will be virtually impossible for anyone to reach the island. It took one San Diego reporter seven years to arrange a trip which was limited to three-hours only! We are therefore very grateful to Lieutenant Markus D. Dausses, Commanding Officer of the US Coast Guard on Iwo, to have worked with us during the final months preceding the hand-over to give us the chance of one last look at the battleground of the Marine Corps' most costly battle. Over 6,800 Marines were killed on Iwo Jima's eight square miles, and of the 81 Medals of Honor awarded to Marines during the Second World War, 22 were earned on Iwo. This aerial shot was taken by *After the Battle* reader, Commander G. Marty Black, USN Reserve, Commanding Officer of Patrol Squadron Ninety based at Glenview, Illinois during a fly-by from Okinawa.



Suribachi bristled with guns emplaced within caves, blockhouses and pillboxes. Covering the east and west beaches, these are two of four guns brought to the island by Lieutenant General Kuribayashi's predecessor, the Reverend Tsunezo Wachi, a captain and the island's commander prior to the arrival of the General in May 1944. Today, a nearby bunker of American origin is used to store unexploded ordnance — some five tons of which are found and destroyed each year. This is also the location of a solar-powered, microwave seismological relay used to detect earthquakes, the continuing volcanic activity on Iwo being indicated by numerous vents on the island emitting sulphurous gases.

clear field of fire and effective coverage of installations in the immediate area. Tunnel entrances, angled at ninety degrees, protected Iwo's defenders against the enemy's explosive blasts and flame-throwers. All caves were electrified and, where necessary, plastered. Most were ventilated in some manner. One 400 by 600 yard area contained over 100 caves. The island's few remaining tanks (26 were lost in July when the submarine *Cobia* sank the *Nisshu Maru*) were buried with only their turrets exposed. Then, at the last possible moment, they were to burst from their biers and overrun the advancing enemy. Mount Suribachi's slopes bristled with more than 115 guns, all anchored in concrete. Two- and three-storied blockhouses and a thousand different caves on seven levels honeycombed the towering volcanic rock.

Three miles to the north, the smaller volcano seethed with ominous foreboding. Its choking, sulphuric gases permeated every underground level. The intense heat at a 30-foot depth forced labourers into intervals of five minute shifts. Nevertheless, work continued in a frenzied race against time. A 75-day food supply lay stored at various locations and, with care, the rations could be stretched to last 150 days. Each man's station would become his tomb, but, the General cautioned, not before he claimed ten enemy lives.

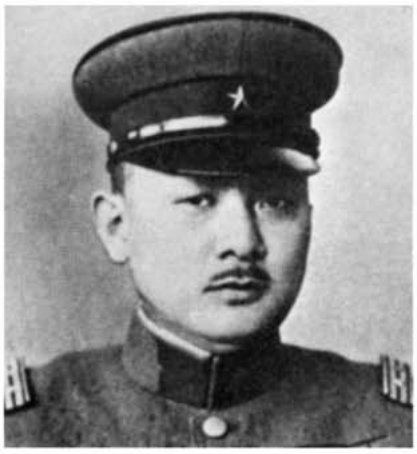
Justly proud of his accomplishments, the old warrior wrote to his son, 'I am proud and feel honoured to fight until death comes . . . ' and well he may, for Tadamichi Kuribayashi was to win rueful admiration from his American adversaries. The General's total dedication to the annihilation of Japan's enemies seldom left him time to express a gentler side of his nature, but in a letter to his daughter Yoko he wrote with fatherly concern about her proper education: 'In Japan, others will not respect you if you make errors in letters'.

American air raids on Iwo began on August 10, 1944, in a concentrated effort to pockmark the island's two airfields and harass Japanese bombers striking against American-held Saipan. Neither side seemed committed to a serious confrontation until America launched her B-29s in an all-out attack against the Japanese homeland. The Superfortresses' airborne path to and from Japan crossed directly over Iwo Jima's airspace, an open invitation that sent the island's pilots roaring from the runways. Though they were unable to actively challenge the huge 'Forts' and their formidable guns, they could, at least, pick off the cripples and strays.

After twenty or so American air raids against Iwo, Kuribayashi retaliated with nine twin-engined bombers against Saipan, three were shot down. Five days later, he sent ten more, lost three and caused little damage. Only two flew out from Iwo on November 27, but scored with the total wreckage of one B-29 and severe damage to 11 others. Flushed with success, the elated pilots raced back to

This bunker stands amid the fine volcanic ash at the base of Suribachi. It has been constructed around the fuselage of a medium bomber, reinforced with concrete and stone, and is believed to have been used after its capture by Major General Graves B. Erskine, Commanding General 3rd Marine Division, as his field headquarters.

The west (*left*) and east beaches as viewed from the gun position shown at the top of the page.



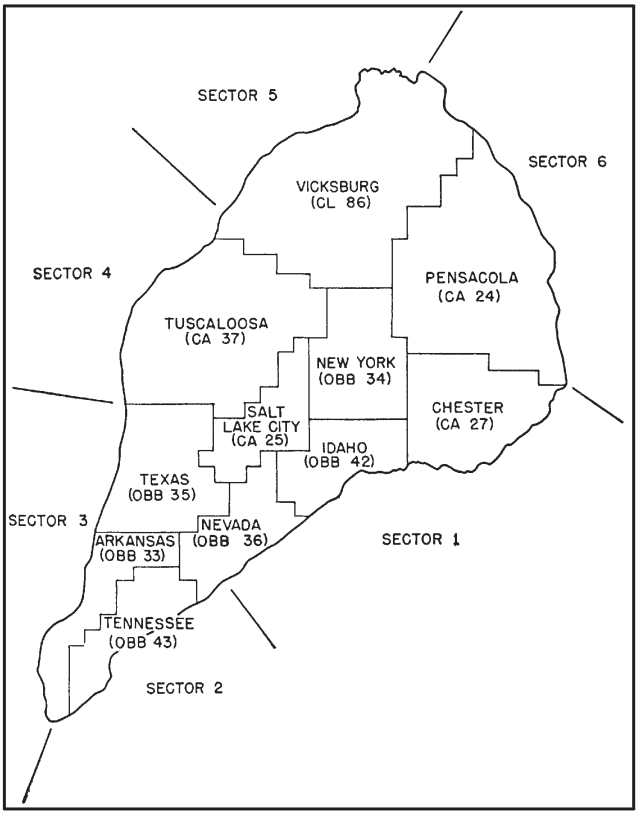
Iwo Jima possessed an elaborate defence system of caves, tunnels, blockhouses and pillboxes, which continued to be improved right up until the time of the invasion. Natural caves were utilised but some of the man-made caves were 30-40 feet deep, complete with stairways, connecting corridors and passageways. It was intended to link them all together with 38,000 metres of tunnels and some 7,000 yards of tunnelling had been dug in just one sector covering half the northern slope of Suribachi. General Kuribayashi *(centre)* had his command post at the northern tip of the island. The entrance *(left)* was sealed and bypassed by the Marines but later opened and investigated by the Army's 147th Infantry Regiment after the battle. Over 40 Japanese were taken prisoner and 52 dead found inside, although the General's body was never found.

Iwo and made their report. Within minutes, the General launched a second raid against the Americans and destroyed three more giant planes on the ground. Kuribayashi rejoiced at the added news that his planes had downed one of the mammoth raiders returning from Tokyo and forced another to pitch in the ocean. Heady with victory, the Japanese hit Saipan's Isley Airfield again on December 7. High and low-flying pilots bombed and strafed almost at will, reduced three Superforts into flaming piles of trash and damaged 23 more.

America could ill afford these heavy losses. Iwo Jima must be neutralised! Saipan dispatched 28 P-38s to strafe the island's ground targets. An hour later, 62 B-29s dropped 620 tons of bombs; at noon, 102 B-24s followed with 194 more tons. The United States Navy sent forth three heavy cruisers and six circling destroyers to pound 1,500 rounds of 8-inch high explosives and 5,334 five-inch shells into Kuribayashi's island fortress. The General's guns silently endured the relentless bombardment. America's warships sailed off, smugly satisfied they had effectively and forever destroyed the enemy.

General Kuribayashi's cunning strategy and effective defences paid off. Not a single casualty resulted from the heavy shelling. Within 24 hours, both airstrips were fully operational again. Continuing shipments of cement, steel, food and ammo supplied Iwo on a fairly regulated basis in spite of heavy American submarine interference. Reconnaissance photos revealed Kuribayashi's defences growing even more formidable.

The United States Navy carried out two additional raids in December. Cruiser Division Five delivered 1,500 8-inch rounds, sank two small ships anchored in Iwo's East Boat Basin and cratered both airfields. The next day, Japanese fighters and bombers roared off Iwo's smooth airstrips to bag four B-29s and damage 11 more on Saipan.



By February 1945, the American High Command was convinced that they could now overcome enemy resistance on any island by the combined use of naval, amphibious and shore-based aircraft. In the case of the invasion of Iwo, code-named Operation 'Detachment', the American plan was to divide up the island into naval gunfire areas. *Left:* **This shows the areas of responsibility for the fire plan for D minus 3 and D minus 2.** *Right:* **The outline of the NW-SE runway of Airfield No. 1 is faintly visible as battleships of Task Force 58 pound the island. Picture taken by an aircraft from the USS *Yorktown*. (NA)**

The gauntlet was down: Iwo had to be captured. The US Navy sank two more ships off the island. The huge battlewagon *Indiana* anchored offshore and pounded Iwo with 203 rounds of the legendary, 2,700 pound, 16-inch shells.

The General's men simply dug in deeper. They considered it a minor nuisance when the *Indiana* pulled back to allow circling cruisers to slam another 1,300 8-inch shells into their shaking island. Low-flying B-24s dropped 7,000 tons of bombs and, for good measure, the cruisers added their 23,000 rounds of 5-inch ordnance to ice the rocky cake.

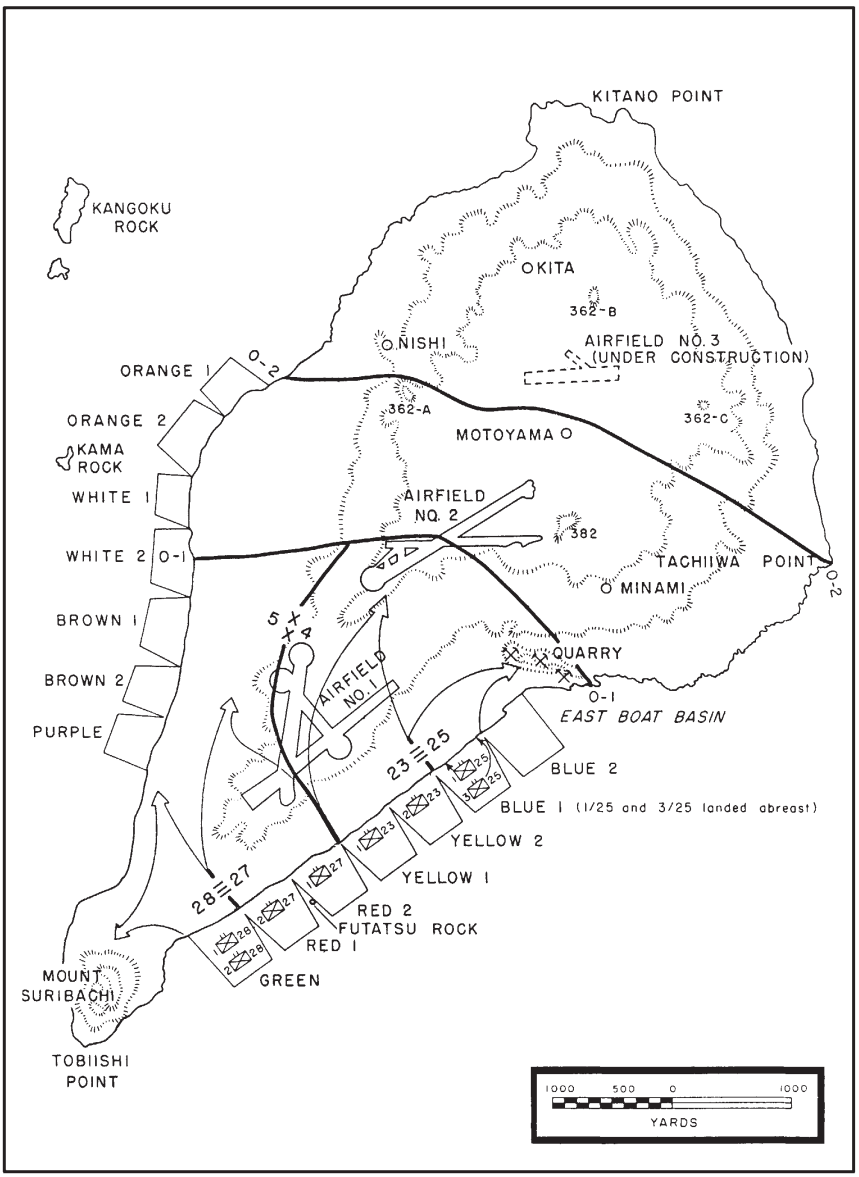
Between raids and during pauses for American ships to refuel or re-arm, the industrious Japanese troops combed rocky inlets and black-sand beaches for treasured driftwood which they immediately fashioned into shelving, bunk beds, tunnel ribbing or fuel. Not a shaving went to waste in the five-foot-wide burrows that criss-crossed the island.

Allied transports in Hawaii, the United States, Saipan, Guam and countless other ports filled every inch of cargo space with tons of matériel, machines, weapons, fuel, food, medicine and hundreds upon thousands of fighting men. Little of their great march across the Pacific remained secret, for the Japanese were well aware when America's invasion forces sailed forth toward the Empire's shores. Iwo Jima steadfastly blocked the armada's path and the entire fleet altered course to initiate a routine, four- to ten-day demolition exercise upon the stubborn Japanese outpost.

American bombers dropped deadly loads on a daily basis for the next ten weeks until February 16, at which time a task force of six battleships, four heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and 16 destroyers surrounded Kuribayashi's stronghold for a final pre-invasion softening up. The command ship divided the island's eight-square-mile surface into 700 squares. Each numbered square became the target of a specific ship. A signal from each ship designated their target destroyed and the corresponding square would be crossed off the plotting board. Nothing less than absolute precision from gun crews would be tolerated. This sharp thorn in America's military side must be dulled.

Battleships *Nevada*, *Texas*, *Arkansas* and *New York*, all veterans from the North Africa and Normandy campaigns, answered in unison to the command signal: 'Commence firing!' Over two hundred 2,000-mph, 16-inch shells slammed into Iwo's concrete defences. The other ships blasted the wounded island with 6,472 8-inch and 15,221 5-inch shells. At the end of a hot, sweaty day, exhausted gun crew shifts were stunned that only 17 out of their 700 targets had been crossed off.

On the morning of February 17, mine-



The invasion plan. Because the predominantly northern or north-westerly winds caused hazardous sea conditions on the western side of the island, the eastern beach was selected for the landing. Stretching some 4,000 yards, it was to be assaulted by a combined force from the 4th and 5th Marine Divisions. From the 4th Division, the 23rd Marines were allocated Yellow 1 and Yellow 2 with the 24th Marines Blue or Yellow as necessary. The 25th Marines were to land on Blue 1. The 27th Marines of the 5th Division would land on Red 1 and Red 2 with the 28th Marines on Green Beach right under the guns on Mount Suribachi.

The intention was to advance straight across the narrow neck of the island to isolate Suribachi. Until the 550-foot volcano was captured and its defences eliminated, the assaulting forces would be at the mercy of the Japanese. On February 14, 1945, the landing force began assembling off Saipan and, on the afternoon of the 15th. set sail for Iwo. Meanwhile, the pre-invasion bombardment was taking place which, it was hoped, would neutralise most of the defences. Close-range bombardment ended just after 6.00 p.m. on February 18. *Above:* **Suribachi from the east — then and now. (NA and Marty Black)**

Operation 'Detachment' begins. By the time the pre-H-Hour bombardment began at 6.40 a.m. on Monday, February 19, the naval commanders already believed that 'they had destroyed, or at least neutralised, those enemy guns capable of placing observed fire on the eastern beaches and their seaward approaches'. In the early light, the 450 ships of the US Fifth Fleet provided an impressive sight — the largest assault force yet assembled in the Pacific. Leading was Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill's Attack Force carrying the men of the 4th and 5th Marine Divisions into battle.

sweepers, under protection of the heavy cruiser *Pensacola*, swept the area. They found no mines and, except for a few random 40mm shots, encountered no enemy fire. The *Pensacola* moved in close. The island's defences offered no challenge. The armoured cruiser nosed in a few yards more. Observers on the bridge detected no movement ashore. Iwo Jima lay as if dead. The unsuspecting ship inched to within 1,600 yards of the beach.

Suddenly, a burst of fire exploded from a well-hidden 150mm. The *Pensacola* sustained six hits in three minutes. The firing ceased as suddenly as it began. The offending gun's concrete base had given way. That short, lethal blast from the shore killed 17 crewmen, wounded 98, damaged the ship's Information Centre, smashed the observation plane on the catapult and exploded the ready ammo below decks. The crippled, flooding *Pensacola* retreated to lick the wounds inflicted by this waspish island's sting.

At 10.30 a.m., 12 LCI gunboats (Landing Craft, Infantry) slowly approached Iwo's black, volcanic shore to assist Navy frogmen chart and destroy underwater obstructions and plant fathom markers.

General Kuribayashi had hoped to play out his masterful waiting game, but an accurate gun crew with a touch of buck-fever fired without his permission. Now it became the General's turn to make his only mistake during the island's heroic defence. It was to cost him dearly.

Kuribayashi assumed the LCIs spearheaded a landing force and ordered his guns to open fire. Light and heavy armament answered his command with alacrity and amazing accuracy. LCI *473* burst into flame after taking 189 holes in her hull. LCI *450* suffered hits in her hull and gun mounts. One shot severed her anchor chain, sent the heavy missile plunging to the bottom and gave birth to the grim joke that LCI *450* was the first fighting ship to drop anchor in Japan's home waters.

Sharpshooting Japanese killed 21, wounded 18 aboard LCI *449*, wiped out her gun platforms, conning tower and bridge. Within a few seconds, every ship in the advance line sustained one or more hits. Those LCIs still able to manoeuvre gallantly risked destruction to take their wounded sisters under tow. Fourteen 6-inch shells slammed into LCI *474*, setting off three magazine explosions and four fires, killing 43 seamen and wounding 153. She went to the bottom with six of her crew. Japanese marksmanship killed seven and wounded 11 aboard the destroyer *Leutze*. Throughout the carnage, the men of the little LCI fleet fought fires, plugged flooding shot holes, tended their wounded and successfully completed their mission. Only one frogman was lost and one wounded. Although the loss of the LCIs was an expensive lesson for the Americans, Kuribayashi would, in the long run, pay dearly. When he prematurely exposed his hidden cannon positions at the base of Mount Suribachi, he guaranteed their destruction.

The big ships seized upon Kuribayashi's fatal error. Once again, bone-weary gun crews manned their turrets. They blasted heavy ammo down a 2,000-yard line-of-fire directly into the General's gun emplacements at the base of Mount Suribachi. Forty-two Saipan-based B-24s raked the island with bombs, shells and dropped over a hundred 50-gallon drums of napalm for a net tally of three blockhouses destroyed and a handful of pillboxes damaged and maybe, just maybe, eliminated.

On Sunday, February 18, with a scheduled Marine landing only 24 hours away, the frustrated attackers revised their strategy in hopes of preventing the wholesale slaughter of America's fighting leathernecks. Battleships *New York* and *Nevada* concentrated their fire along the beach. The 37,000-ton *Tennessee* avenged her Pearl Harbor wounds by carving up the cliff emplacements on Hill 382, while the *Idaho* moved south to pound Suribachi. The battlewagons stripped every suspicious-looking mound of its cover. If concrete showed, they pulverised the position with one-ton, high capacity shells.

Previous shelling forced Kuribayashi to rebase his bombers 175 miles north on the airfield at Chichi Jima, which reduced his airpower to two operable, well-hidden Zeros armed with 60kg bombs. He ordered the pilots to dive-bomb and ram the largest of the attacking ships. Both planes roared down the second airfield's pock-marked runway and soared skyward. They barely reached the heights of Mount Suribachi before they were downed, not by anti-aircraft fire, but by a hail of artillery shells which were blanketing the island.

An incessant five-hour 'Rain of Death' roto-tilled Iwo's surface, turning it into a Dante's Inferno. The island shuddered as American bombs ate into her very soul. At the end of her ordeal, 16 blockhouses, 20 or so pillboxes and 17 shore batteries, four of which sat at Suribachi's base, lay in ruins. However, the defending troops simply retreated deeper into the hundreds of remaining tunnels and waited.

The bloody sands of Iwo Jima. Forty-eight years later, it is difficult to comprehend the carnage wrought along this strand of black volcanic ash.

The following morning dawned light and airy. It was D-Day — February 19, 1945. At 6.40 a.m., the heaviest pre-H-Hour bombardment of World War II began. The *North Carolina*, *Washington*, *Indianapolis* and *Biloxi*, all units of Task Force 58, joined the armada which now totalled seven battleships, four heavy cruisers, three light cruisers and ten destroyers . . . only a small portion of what it eventually took for the United States to eliminate one determined man, his brave command and a dirty, smelly little island.

The *North Carolina* and *San Francisco* anchored opposite the heart of the island. Four battleships, four cruisers and eight destroyers covered the south-eastern coast from the quarry to Mount Suribachi. Two battleships, in the company of five cruisers and one destroyer, pressed the attack against the western beaches, both airfields and the rear slopes of Suribachi. For the next 85 minutes, the big ships fired 75 rounds each while the cruisers let go with 100 apiece. When the ships called time-out to re-arm, 120 rocket-firing, napalm-dropping, carrier-based planes rained unopposed destruction over Iwo. The battleships resumed shelling with 155 rounds apiece, the cruisers fired 150 and the destroyers blasted away with 500 rounds each. All ships ceased fire at 8.50 a.m. to allow the

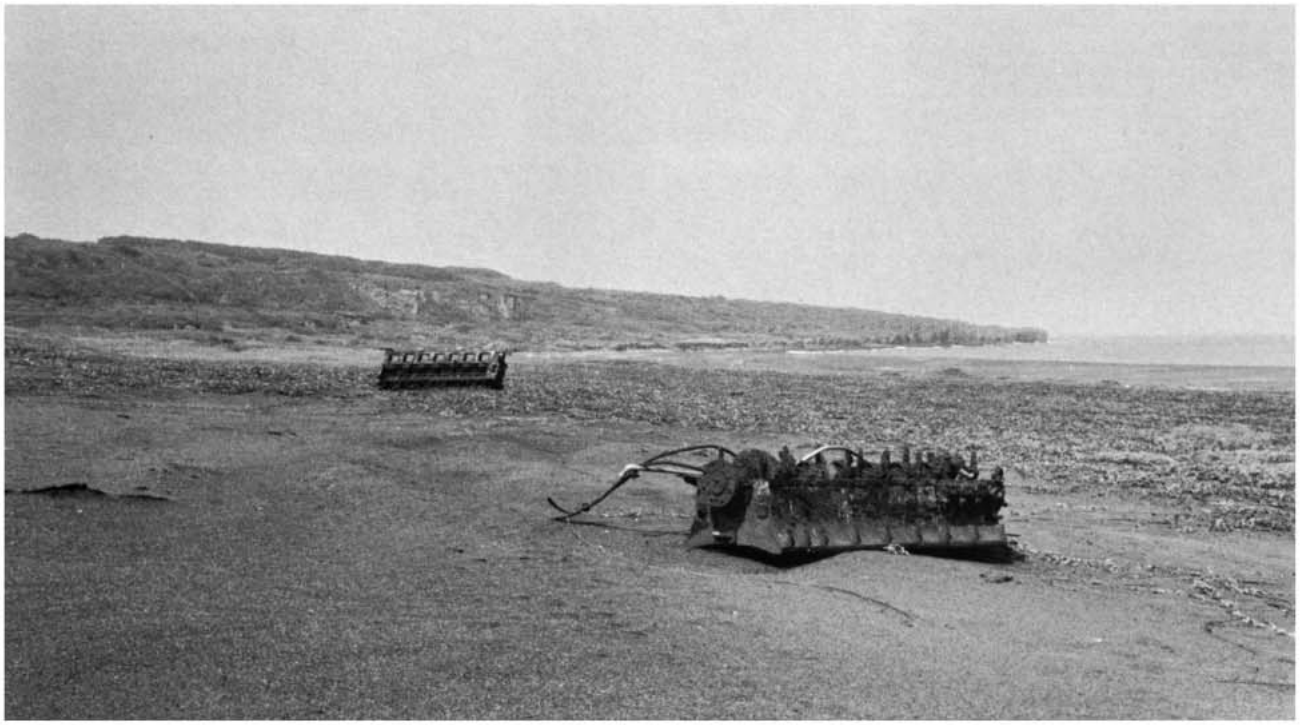
The 5th Amphibian Tractor Battalion (the '5th Amp Tracs') leave the line of departure 4,000 yards offshore and head for Blue 1 (denoted by the single stripe). (NA)

Above: **The chaos on Blue 2 (double-stripe). The insignia on the amtrac indicates 5th Amph Trac Battalion Company B. In the background, the hulk of a Japanese destroyer with East Boat Basin in the distance. (NA)** *Below:* **The recreational areas of Iwo Jima have been cleared of wreckage. Only odd items of debris provide a link with the events of that Monday morning.**

planes a seven-minute strafing run. Two minutes later, LST rocket ships launched a deadly fury of 20,000 screaming rockets. Within one minute, 68 LVTs (Landing Vehicle, Tracked), some armed with 75mm cannon, charged through the surf to disgorge 1,360 fighting leathernecks onto the black, shifting, lava sands of Iwo Jima's eastern beach.

The first wave of Marines met only scattered, small arms fire, mortar and small anti-tank fire, but once Kuribayashi's warriors settled into firing positions, the tempo and volume of fire increased under the guiding hands of their maestro. The American's lightly-armoured, slow-moving tractors became easy targets as they bogged down in soft, volcanic ash. A few managed to crest the 10- to 15-foot sloping terrace, but none made it more than 50 yards inland.

Wave after wave of varied landing craft sped shoreward. Within 45 minutes, the beach overflowed with 9,000 men, tanks, tractors, jeeps, beached landing craft and tons of war matériel in one huge traffic jam.



The thick layer of black volcanic ash which made movement of both men and machines very difficult is well illustrated in this shot taken on D plus 1 looking north along Yellow Beach. (NA)

The 4th Marine Division crammed onto eastern beach sectors Yellow 1, Yellow 2, Blue 1, Blue 2 under the observation and fire of nearby Hill 382. They caught the first withering rounds of fire. Within an hour, Kuribayashi's strategy paid off handsomely. For every man he lost, America sacrificed ten. Even the gentle Pacific rose in protection of its island fortress by suddenly changing its current to a three- to five-knot southerly drift. Angry seas tossed landing craft, men and mountains of material head-over-heels into churning surf. Crashing breakers grabbed struggling humans, engulfed them in their foaming maws, then swirled the lifeless bodies along the black bottom. Kuribayashi's fortress, with help from the sea, re-fashioned the island's black-sand beach into a massive junk-yard and butcher shop.

The left-flanked 5th Division met with less opposition when the 1st Battalion, 28th Marines landed on Green Beach and Red 1 and Red 2, but the protesting sands of Iwo Jima refused to support the weight of foreign intruders intent upon charging across the narrow, 700-yard neck of land to isolate Suribachi from the rest of the island. Men and equipment foundered in the volcanic ash which offered no traction for tanks nor protection for the Marine attempting to dig in. With each shovel's bite into the unstable granules, a cascade of liquid sand poured into the shallow depression.

The cruiser *Santa Fe* set up a continuous fire along the base of Suribachi while the *Nevada* blasted her secondary and main batteries again and again against blockhouses ahead of advancing Marines. The newly-arrived *West Virginia* poured tons of iron and steel over the head and shoulders of the extinct volcano. American troops reached Iwo Jima's Chidori Airfield — Airfield No. 1 to the Americans — within 2½ hours, and Suribachi now lay nearly cut off from the rest of the island.

Although undated and taken by a different photographer, as we see LSM *202* in both these pictures, they must have been taken around the same time on the same day. The view is now south towards Red and Green Beaches of the 5th Marine Division, lying in the shadow of Mount Suribachi. (NA)

'A Jap mortar lands on the heavily-crowded beach at Iwo Jima. Heavy mortar barrages were laid down by the Japs wherever Marines and landing boats were concentrated unloading supplies.' So runs the original caption to this picture which appears to have been taken on one of the Yellow beaches. The headland behind East Boat Basin can be seen in the distance. (NA)

Concentrated Japanese fire knocked out most of the few tanks able to land. Land mines disabled the others. LSM *216* nosed to the beach four times before she found footing firm enough to unload her tanks, but the first one off bogged down and blocked the others for four hours. The Seabees (Navy Engineers) suffered 269 casualties during their mad scramble to build emergency roadways and ramps. By 4.00 p.m., they had assisted 1,032 men ashore. Not even the setting sun could soften the horror of a blood-soaked beach groaning under the colossal weight of America's twisted and torn machines of war.

'In death all men are equal . . .'. Their rifles beside them, a Marine *(right)* and a Japanese *(below)* lie beside a smashed pillbox on Yellow Beach. (NA)

The wind shifted at 11.00 a.m. the next morning to create a favourable lee shore for the LCVPs (Landing Craft, Vehicle/Personnel) and LCMs loaded with badly-needed men and supplies. A few lucky amphibians dashed in, unloaded and dashed out. The others added their bones to the mounting scrap-yard on the beach. It became all too obvious that American forces would fail in their planned objective of capturing Iwo Jima within the estimated four- to ten-day schedule. Kuribayashi had done his work well.

Above: **Men of the 24th Marines pictured on February 21 after the capture of these battered coastal gun positions at East Boat Basin.** *Right:* **Casualties are treated at a forward aid station below the cliff. Wounded were transferred to the hospital ships *Bountiful, Ozark, Pinkney, Samaritan* and *Solace* lying some 2,000 yards offshore. In all, over 13,700 casualties had been evacuated by the battle's end. (NA)**

Communication with assigned bombardment ships became unreliable after shore-based fire-control parties suffered heavy losses of men and equipment. The ingenious men of Landing Craft Support Ship *51* quickly overcame this obstacle by moving their vessel to within 650 yards off the East Boat Basin and near Hill 382 where, at the first hint of fire from hidden Japanese positions, they aimed their light weapon tracers at the offending site until nearby cruiser *Vicksburg* marked the target, opened up with her main batteries and blasted the area into a pile of rubble.

Although the landscape has been tidied of much of the detritus of war, this smashed blockhouse stands as a silent witness to the ferocity of the fighting.

For three gruelling days, Marines fought for the control of Mount Suribachi. Finally, on the fourth day and at a cost of 900 dead and wounded, elements of the attacking 28th Marine Regiment managed to secure the top of the volcano and raise a small American flag. But the fall of Mount Suribachi by no means guaranteed the fall of Iwo Jima.

The battle for the volcano was an epic in itself, the capture of Suribachi becoming a legend in the long and varied history of the United States Marine Corps.

By D plus 4, the 5th Marine Division had made sufficient progress against Suribachi that the order was given for the 2nd Battalion of the 28th Marines to secure and occupy the crest. The battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Chandler W. Johnson (killed in action on March 2), sent out two three-man patrols from Companies D and F to reconnoitre and probe for enemy resistance and, as none was encountered, the Marines reached the lip of the crater at 9.40 a.m. A 40-strong detachment from Company E was sent to back them up which reached the rim by 10.15 a.m. At this point, the Marines encountered a group of defenders who put up a stiff resistance. Even so, a length of pipe was found in the wrecked Japanese radar station on the summit and a 54in.x28in. flag was tied to the top *(above)* **and raised over Mount Suribachi at 10.20 a.m.** *(right).* **(NA)**

Left: **Sergeant Louis R. Lowery was with Company E to record the event. Identifiable in his picture are Pfc Gene M. Marshall carrying the radio and Sergeant Henry O. Hanson, immediately to his left, wearing the cap with his right hand on the pole. (NA) Soon afterwards, an unnamed Marine went aboard LST** *779,* **beached near the foot of Suribachi, to obtain a larger flag (96in.x56in.) which would be more visible to the ships offshore.**

This second flag was taken to the top. By now, two more photographers had joined the party: Joe Rosenthal of Associated Press, who landed with the second wave of the assault, and Private Robert R. Campbell of the Marine Corps. Previous accounts state that Rosenthal arrived just in time to picture the second flag-raising but Bob Campbell's photo *(right)* **clearly shows him waving his camera with the small flag still flying.**

Joe Rosenthal got ready to shoot the raising of the large flag with his Speed Graphic set at 1/400th at f/8. At his side, with his cine camera loaded with colour film, was Sergeant William Genaust, a 'leatherneck' cameraman. Just as Rosenthal was about to expose his first shot, two Marines walked in front of him so he took three more pictures to make sure he would end up with a good one. *Above left:* Bob Campbell pictured Rosenthal taking his fourth photo — a posed 'insurance' shot — and then photographed Rosenthal overlooking Green Beach *(above right).* LST *779,* from which the flag was taken, can be seen below. All the unexposed film, along with Press reports of the event, was then airlifted to CINCPAC HQ in Guam by flying boat. It arrived just before 8.00 p.m. (Guam time) that Friday and was processed immediately. The first negative revealed the Stars and Stripes flying high over a group of Marines — Rosenthal's final posed picture — but the second and third pieces of film had stuck together in the developing tank, emulsion to emulsion, and were ruined. (NA)

Left: The last negative revealed a dramatic, beautifully-composed picture symbolising an event which stirred the world and inspired a nation. Fortunately, the slightly different angle compared with Bill Genaust's almost identical cine frame *(above)* meant that the Marine who walked into frame had not spoiled the shot. L-R: Pfc Ira H. Hayes, Pfc Franklin R. Sousley, Sergeant Michael Strank, and PhM2C John H. Bradley, a Navy Medical Corpsman (both obscured by comrades), Pfc Rene A. Gagnon, and Corporal Harlon H. Block. Strank, Block, and Sousley were killed in action before the island was secured.

Left: Private Campbell also recorded the event, this photo being taken from a slightly higher angle to show the sweep of the invasion beach. (NA) *Right:* Today the site is marked by this monument, both flags being preserved in the Marine Corps Museum at Quantico, Virginia. Of the six flag-raisers who survived the war, only John Bradley is alive today, living in Antigo, Wisconsin. Marty Black went to see him for us in April 1992 but Bradley is very modest and shuns all publicity.

Even after the top of Mount Suribachi had been reached, numerous caves still had to be cleared. Here, smoke is coming from both entrances on either side of the rim after a cave has been blasted with explosives. (NA)

Kuribayashi stood at his northerly command post, sorely disappointed over the fall of his island's southern defences. He vowed to hold his line of disciplined troops against the Marine divisions' northward advance. The General and his loyal warriors now fought a war of attrition. Rifles, flame-throwers, grenades, knives and entrenching tools became their weapons of the moment. They hugged so closely to their attacker's lines that American artillery became useless. They waited in hidden caves until the Marines attempted to thrust ahead, then popped up from behind and attacked with ferocious determination. By D+10, it became painfully apparent to American troops that they were continuing to shed their life's blood at the intolerable rate of two for one.

Time has softened the edges of the crater, its sides covered with patchy vegetation.

Another cave is attacked with flame, while Marines of RCT 28 stand ready to tackle any occupants who might emerge. Note that LST *779* still lies on the beach. In a message to General Kuribayashi from the commander of the 312th Independent Infantry Battalion defending the Mount Suribachi sector, he said that the 'enemy's bombardments from the air and sea and their assaults with explosions are very fierce and if we ever try to stay and defend our present positions, it will lead us to self-destruction.' He concluded: 'We should rather like to go out of our position and choose death by "Banzai" charges.'

Beside the Marine victory monument on the top of Suribachi stand two Japanese memorials. *Right:* **This one remembers the Kamikaze pilots who sacrificed their lives to attack US shipping at Iwo Jima. On D plus 2, around 50 aircraft of the 2nd Mitate Special Attack Unit took off from Katori airfield near Yokosuka and, after refuelling at Hachijo Jima (an island about 125 miles south of Tokyo), appeared over Iwo towards evening. The attack lasted three hours, the carrier *Bismarck Sea* being sunk, and the *Saratoga* badly damaged and forced to return to Pearl Harbor. A third carrier, *Lunga Point*, was also hit as were the *Keokuk* and LST *477*. There were no Japanese survivors.**

General Kuribayashi's communications to Tokyo apprised the homeland of his desperate struggle. By no means was his communiqué of March 8 an exaggeration: 'All surviving fighting positions have sustained heavy losses, but fighting spirit still running high. Inflicting great damage on enemy.' Nor his message on March 9: 'We inflict enemy losses of 798 men and one tank.' March 13: 'Captured documents say enemy is 3rd, 4th, and 5th Marine Divisions . . . in northern district one aircraft shot down, 200 men killed.'

The third memorial on Mount Suribachi is a general one in remembrance of all the Japanese war dead.

Nearly 10,000 American casualties had been evacuated from Iwo Jima by March 6, a day both sides seemed to have mutually declared a 'rest' day even though 400 more Americans joined the casualty list on that day. On March 7, American forces started their big push. In 67 minutes, 132 guns from 11 Marine artillery battalions slammed the entrenched Japanese from a range of 100 yards while a battleship and cruiser set up continuous fire. Over 22,000 rounds of 75mm and 150mm shells decimated the western half of the Japanese lines, then concentrated on their eastern front.

Kuribayashi radioed a message to his homeland on March 10: 'Enemy attacks continuing day and night . . . our troops still fighting bravely . . . enemy bombardments one battleship, 11 destroyers . . . 30 fighters and bombers . . . so fierce I cannot express nor write of it here.'

Tokyo school children sang a song on March 14, an anthem expressly written to commemorate the men on Iwo Jima who were about to die. Japan's public broadcast of *The Song of Iwo Defence* ignited a flame of patriotism across the homeland and brought comfort to the beleaguered garrison. General Kuribayashi, his doomed officers and men radioed a thankful, heartfelt message to all of

The capture of Mount Suribachi, while not marking the beginning of the end, did enable the Marines to turn northward. However, little did the Americans realise that General Kuribayashi had concentrated his main forces in the central and northern part of the island. The Japanese defences were a masterpiece of ingenuity with hundreds of individual camouflaged caves, bunkers, pillboxes and blockhouses spread amidst an inhospitable landscape of rocks, cliffs and ravines. Even more disappointing from the American point of view, was that these defences, for the large part underground, had come through the bombing and shelling almost unscathed. The worst of the fighting was yet to come as each position would have to be neutralised one by one. Those that were bypassed only enabled the Japanese to infiltrate the rear. It was a nightmare struggle which was to last virtually until the end of March. These pictures do little to portray the way it was — that is better left to our author, Don Marshall, in his personal narrative beginning over the page. *Above and right:* **Marines cleaning out caves with flame-throwers and grenades while riflemen stand at the ready. (NA)**

The regimental command post of the 28th Marines. The men dig in to face another night of infiltration and mortaring as they close the northern quarter of Iwo Jima. Picture by Sergeant Ferneyhough on March 8. (NA)

Right: **Twenty-five days after the flag-raising on Mount Suribachi, 5th Division Marines planted the Stars and Stripes on Hill 165 at Kitano Point close to the northern tip of the coast seen *below* as it is today.**

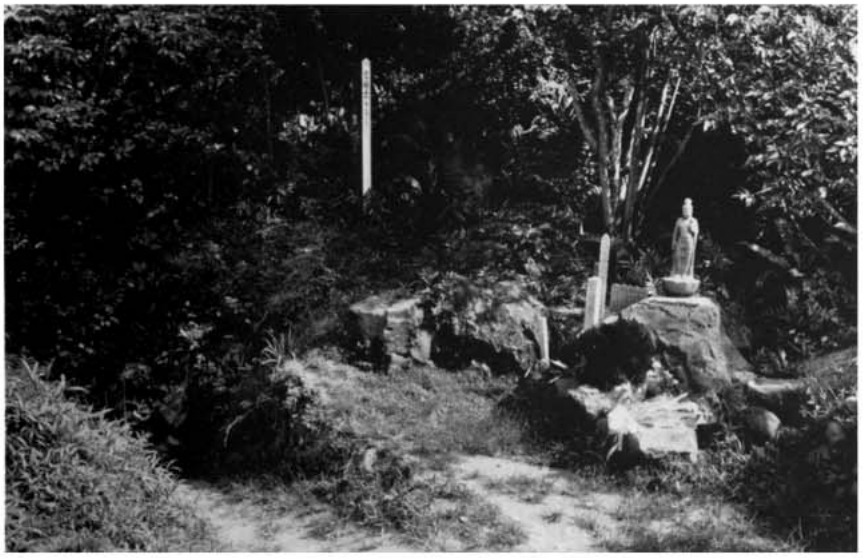
Japan. The starving, thirsty troops relayed another brave message on March 21: 'Enemy front line 200 or 300 yards away. Attacking us with tanks. Advised us to surrender by loud-speaker. Only laughed at this childish trick.'

The Japanese Empire received Iwo's last, faint message on March 23: 'We are going to fight bravely to the last moment . . . ' followed by a silence that would last through all eternity.

General Tadamichi Kuribayashi lived and died in the finest tradition of a Samurai warrior . . . to serve his Emperor. He died during the last days of Iwo's bloody demise, unaware of his promotion to full general, his body buried in an unmarked, unknown grave, hidden deep in the black volcanic ash of his island fortress.

The bloodiest battle of the Pacific cost the Americans 6,821 dead and 19,217 wounded.

Although the island had been declared secure on March 16, a hard-core of approximately 500 Japanese were to resist fanatically in the gorge to the south-west of Kitano Point for another nine days. All present-day aerial photographs were taken for us by Lieutenant Commander Isamu Kinoshita, the Japanese Liaison Officer on Iwo.



Over 22,000 Japanese died, dedicated to the final sacrifice in defence of their Empire, held steadfast within their island fortress. For 36 days, the warriors fought in lonely isolation, outnumbered, surrounded on all sides and beyond all hope of salvation from their beloved homeland.

Only 1,083 Japanese survived the island holocaust yet the memory of their fallen comrades restored a sense of pride to a nation shamed by defeat.

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz described the Battle of Iwo Jima as a place where 'uncommon valour was a common virtue.' His immortal words seem to reach out across the span of history in search of the Samurai general and his tenacious warriors.

It is believed that General Kuribayashi either committed hara-kiri in the gorge or went down fighting in a last-ditch battle early on March 26. Forty of the Japanese dead carried swords but examination of the bodies failed to identify the General. *Left:* **His memorial stands outside the cave which was once his command post.**

Aged 18 and already a veteran of Saipan and Tinian, Don Marshall was a driver with the 5th Amphibious Tractor Battalion, his section due to land on Yellow 2. He drove his Amtrac ashore close to the wrecked Japanese transport whose funnel can be seen lying askew on the left of the picture *(above).* **(NA)**

Below: **Don is pictured after Iwo Jima wearing two Smith & Wesson .44-calibre pistols taken from Japanese on Iwo. Later, Smith & Wesson wrote him a letter of apology for the Japanese having used their products against Americans but stated that the pistols concerned had been sold to Japan in 1903!**

'See No Iwo'

It was D–1. I took a turn around the deck. The bright aluminum moon hanging in the sky paved an avenue of light across the calm Pacific waters toward the ship. More ships, hundreds of them, were proceeding on a direct course to an innocuous speck of land half way between Saipan and Tokyo.

I had finished my last murder mystery, reluctantly painted over the Jap flags on my helmet, as per request of Lieutenant Charles Schultz, C Company. If our fighter pilots kept score of kills on their planes, why couldn't I on my helmet?

Those needing comfort of prayer before we landed in the morning attended services. Not being religious, I went below to partake of an old Marine Corps' tradition, steak dinner. Some, fearing stomach wounds, refused, but not I.

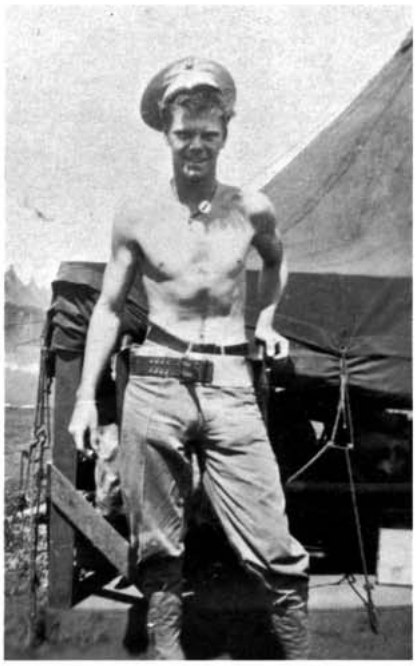
The Fifth Amphibious Tractor Battalion had been organised at Camp Pendleton, California, just north of San Diego, in early 1944. We embarked for the Pacific Theatre in April of that year to engage the enemy at Saipan and Tinian. We were now heading a warm-up operation before taking on the really big one, Okinawa.

We would be at Iwo only four days, one trip ashore to land our assault troops, which were allotted ten days to mop up, and one trip to deliver supplies. Our battle maps divided Iwo's 3,600-yard-wide, black-sand beach into Green Beach, Red Beaches 1 and 2, Yellow Beaches 1 and 2 and Blue Beaches 1 and 2.

Fifth Amp Tracs were assigned to land troops on Blue Beaches and Yellow Beach 2, 5th Division Regiments 27th and 28th to the left, nearest the base of Mount Suribachi, and 4th Division Regiments 23rd and 25th to the right. The 27th and 28th, after securing the volcano, were to turn north and drive up the west side of the island, while the 23rd and 25th would cut directly across the island, then take Motoyama Airfield, pivot right and immediately drive up the centre and east side of Iwo. The 3rd Division would remain at sea, a floating reserve. They went into action on the third day.

We could hear the whumps as our fleet's cannons slammed shells into the tiny island. Periodically, the LST's loudspeaker broadcasted an up-date . . . the UDT (Underwater Demolition Team and said to be 'half fish and half nuts') finished scouring the beach and found only one mine! Good news. We didn't know that our LCIs had been severely mauled while acting as gunboats the day before. All twelve had been hit, nine of those put out of commission and one sunk. Nor did the loudspeaker relay news of the cruiser *Pensacola* getting slammed with artillery fire at 1,600 yards, taking six hits, 17 dead and 120 wounded. We were unaware the battleship *Tennessee* and a support destroyer had taken direct hits.

My crew chief, Sergeant Walter 'Stoney' Cragg and I were laying on top of our amphib playing chess when around 4.30 a.m. orders came to stand down for loading. Stoney folded the miniature board of pegged chessmen and stuffed it in his pocket. We planned on finishing the game later. While he supervised loading, I cranked the huge Continental engine 42 times to prevent cylinder blockage.



No world-encompassing decisions were made by me, and nothing occurred that would not have occurred anyway with my presence or absence on the island of Iwo Jima. Though, most certainly, there were others who influenced the outcome far greater in their capacities and sacrifice than I. Where does that élan come from that seems to infect every Marine? What is it that makes him go out daily into dangerous places; to get himself shot at; to face horrible death in case of capture by the Japanese foe, or to place himself in a possibly fatal situation to aid or protect a buddy and then to play it down over a bottle of beer at some later date? I don't know. Maybe he has to be a little nuts.

DON MARSHALL, 1993

Bright lights flooded the LST's hangar-like deck, the entire ship swarmed with activity. None of us suspected we were about to face the most formidable fortress in the world, much less become participants in a battle without massive troop movements or large scale planning, a battle destined to kill some 28,000 men in a dirty, hate-filled, 36-day slugfest.

I knew it would be hot inside the amphib. The huge, three-ton transmission, positioned between me and my radio man, reached temperatures hot enough to cook food. The morning was mild and, not wishing to roast myself, I stripped off my dungaree jacket and climbed in bare chested.

The drive shoreward was easy, a clear day, no surf. The small slit in the armour at eye water level limited my vision. I followed the crew chief's directions, relayed to him via my radio man, Frank Rhoads. The island loomed ahead with amazing rapidity. Occasionally, I saw planes wafting down, squirting machine gun bullets or dropping napalm. When the planes bore off, the fleet resumed its rolling barrage, the billowing smoke blacked out everything in sight.

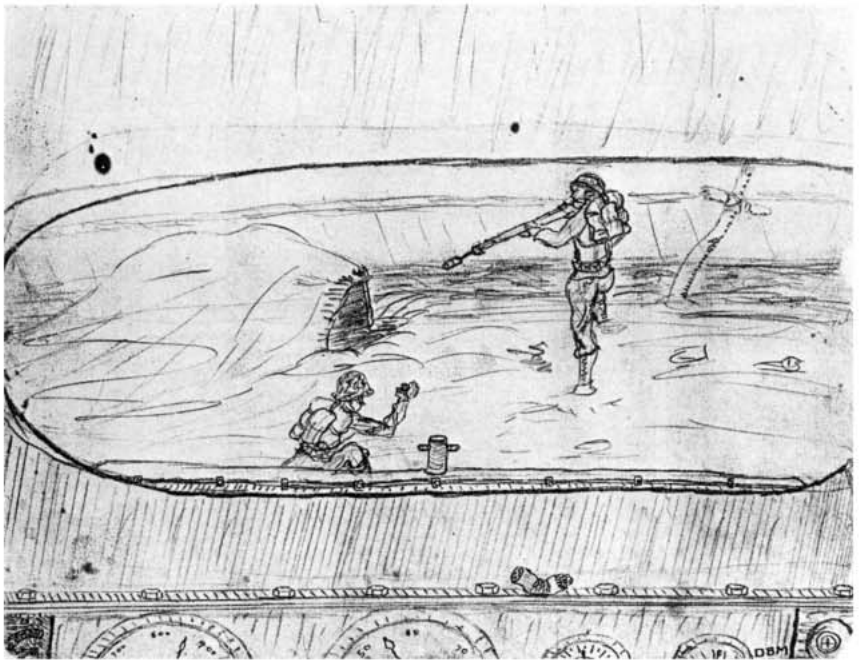
We pushed ahead, passing through flotsam from yesterday's stricken ships. At first, Frank thought the floating objects were mines and squinched his eyes. We were too close and the tractor too clumsy to swerve, so I just ploughed on through. Stoney told me to slow down, I was getting ahead of the pack. Suddenly, my tractor nudged the edge of the beach. I could feel by the surf action that the water was very deep against the steep shoreline wall. Our men would drown if they stormed off the ramp. I pulled forward at least three tractor lengths, about 75 feet, above the water line.

We landed about 8.57 a.m., three minutes early. It felt like driving through oatmeal, the grousers would not grab, we bellied down. I raced the engine and dragged the clutch, finally I got some traction. I drove across the beach and up the terrace. By doing so, I exposed the tractor's cab and machine gun turret to small arms fire from the third terrace level and the airfield, but at least the troops could disembark on dry land under protection of the terrace shoulder.

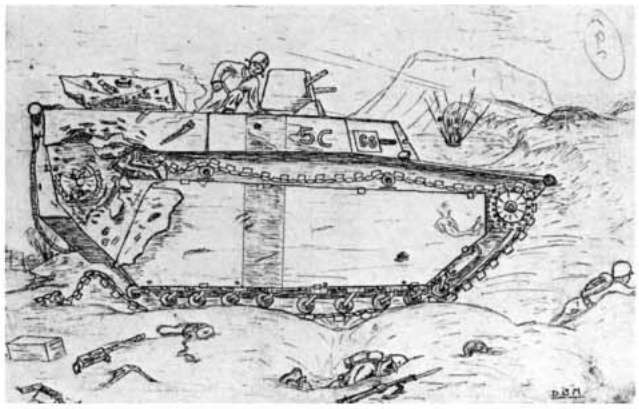
The ramp dropped, the troops raced out under machine gun fire. The Japs knocked out my headlights, peppered the cab quite handsomely and shot away about ten feet of my antenna, leaving its stub twanging uselessly. I waited until Stoney signalled the ramp raised and locked, then engaged reverse gear. Nothing happened. I tried again with no success. I tried first gear, intending to climb the terrace and either turn around or spin in place if I were clear of troops on both sides.

Nothing worked, the transmission bands were overheated. I would have to shut down for a cooling period. I informed the crew chief via the lip mike. He hesitated a moment before answering. The problem became academic when he informed me the tractor had taken a fatal hit (I didn't feel a thing) and we had to abandon. Rhoads tried to disable the radio with a slug, its ricocheting was far worse than the enemy fire. I told him to knock it off and barrelled out the small escape hatch alongside the engine. Though Rhoads' escape route was hampered by the red-hot transmission, he scrambled over it and followed close on my heels and we tumbled into the open cargo deck with the rest of the crew.

Fortunately, we had unloaded the troops safely and rolled up the ramp before the Japs disabled us. Though none of our crew were injured, Stoney said when the shell penetrated our tool box, wrenches exploded like shrapnel. Enemy fire pounded our disabled tractor, small arms and 50-caliber bounced like rain off our light, half-inch armor. We hoped the ground troops had time to dig foxholes. Sandbags lined the walls of our tractor for the purpose of plopping atop of lobbed grenades. I heard a clang and felt a jar, sand poured over my bare back. A 47mm had cut through our right side armour and a sandbag, sliced through the pistol grip of our 30-caliber MG and exited the opposite side without exploding. We figured it was time to get out. I reached into the cab, grabbed my tanker jacket and threw it on. We took turns, alternating sides as we bailed out, Frank dropped over one side, Ted Klein the other, then Marcus Guiterrez. Stoney and I bailed out last.



'It is hard,' writes Don Marshall, ' to put an exact sequence as to days and events and my own story covers only a selected few events that were pertinent to my drawings. These were drawn in 1945 on Japanese paper with their pens or pencils on the island by candlelight on board the wrecked ship I describe in the story. Others were drawn on board ship returning to Maui. This was the view from inside my amphibious tractor (driver's viewing slit in armor is exaggerated to show scene) upon discharging troops on Iwo Jima beach. Dash, instruments, snuffed cigarette butt add reality. Marines dispatch occupants of bunker. Level of Chidori airfield shows faintly in background. Wooden cross was apparently a communication tree. It was within moments of this scene that my tractor was hit by 47mm anti-tank fire from weapon concealed to right. Lieutenant Nakamura was cited in a dispatch by General Kuribayashi to Tokyo as the man who destroyed 12 amphibious tractors on the first day.'



Left: **Don Marshall: 'Disabled 5th Amph Trac, Company C, Number 66. Walter Cragg commander, Don Marshall driver, Frank Rhoads radio, with Ted Klein and Marcus Guiterrez crewmen, is out of the invasion force. Of the 136 tractors in the battalion, only 19 were operational at end of month. Marshall, last to abandon, took shelter in a bunker to right of wreck. Suribachi in background.'** *Right:* **Same general area today photographed for us by Seaman Sean Kehoe of the US Coast Guard. In the foreground lie the rusting remains of an American tank.**

'I really don't know how to describe this photo (which was taken most probably about 30 minutes after my arrival on the beach). My tank is just to the left out of the picture. I would say the photographer was standing or crouching immediately to the rear and possibly under it. Dead and wounded were being thrown back and forth killed, so to speak, over and over. The smashed pillbox [1], where I got my shirt is in the centre and to its left is the ditch [2] where Jap zeroed in on me, then killed three others. The rod [3] lying in the left foreground could be my radio antenna. My route from the tractor to the pillbox is shown dotted. The area [4] marks the hole I dug earlier. During the process, a shell exploded nearby and a piece of thigh and buttocks landed in the hole. I threw it out. I then left the hole and went to the ditch but after I almost got machine-gunned I pulled back and moved to the left and then over the top terrace and forward.' (NA)

The minute my feet touched ground, I knew what caused the transmission problem. The tracks were mushed down in pumice, a soft ash which we mistakenly assumed was sand. Though it was dry, it gave no support. I tried to run, it felt like plowing through knee deep mud, pulling one leg at a time free from the gripping volcanic ash. Shell-fire was increasing at a tremendous rate.

I headed to the right toward a destroyed blockhouse some 20 yards away and barrelled in through twisted reinforcing iron. Stoney and four other Marines were there, along with three dead Japanese. I noticed the one I was sitting on was about my size and wearing a fairly clean, white silk shirt. I thought, why not? I needed to replace the shirt I left behind, it looked like we were in for a stay and I knew it had snowed just three days before we landed.

Enemy fire zeroed in, our shelter took three direct hits. I told Stoney goodbye. I looked outside, many of our tractors were already bogged down and out of commission, the others were heading back to the transports. I started crawling up a small revetment away from the beach. Just as I reached the top, sand erupted alongside my head. A machine gun had me pinpointed. I backed down. A lieutenant and his squad were struggling up, I warned him about the gunner, but he wouldn't listen. He and two of his men fell back dead.

Don Marshall: 'This photo taken by Bob Campbell, USMC, must have been taken about three-quarters of an hour after the first wave landed. The wrecked Jap cargo ship can be seen with my disabled amtrac partially obscured by the bunker. Corporal B. K. Eagan's tractor is behind me near the surf line to the left of the picture. (NA)

I ran past a small destroyed bunker directly in front of my tractor. I found a BAR [Browning Automatic Rifle] laying beside a dead Marine. While I was busy grabbing it and his bandoliers, the infantry knocked out the Jap gunner and I moved forward with them. We crossed the desert of black sand, about 250 yards, at a half jog, under intense bombardment. When the shells gouged out holes in the sand, we dived into them for cover. We reached the north end of the first airfield. A half-dozen bunkers immediately raked our entire line. I and a group from the 25th dove into a shell-hole. A captain directed us to set up a continuous fire into every visible gun port while the Marines moved forward and lobbed in grenades.

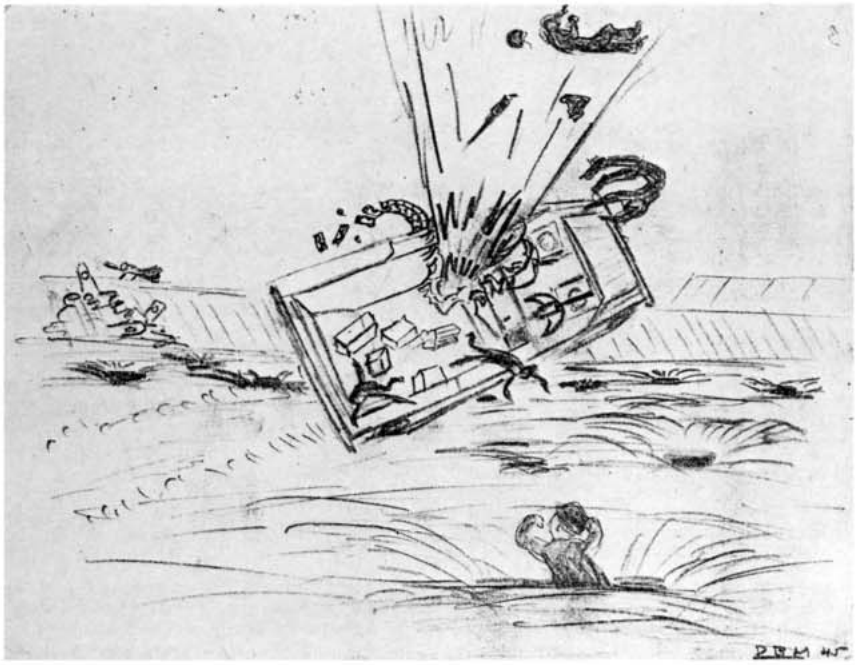
The captain recognised my tanker jacket and knew I wasn't part of the infantry. He asked if I knew where to find some bazooka ammo. I told him that about a dozen rounds were still in my tractor, apparently left behind when the infantry disembarked. He asked me to go back and assigned one of the infantry to help bring it up. I handed over my BAR and bandoliers to one of the men and the two of us started back.

It took us about 45 minutes to reach my tractor. I climbed in and tried to lower the ramp. It was jammed, so I threw all the rounds over the side, about 20 in all. He grabbed half of them and took off. I crawled into the tractor cab to check the radio. Rhoads' shot had only damaged one knob and the set still worked in spite of the short aerial. I was unable to tune in any orders, but did dial in to some fine music followed by a female voice reporting our landing on Iwo. The woman was not Tokyo Rose. She called herself Little Orphan Annie, probably a stand-in for the much overworked Rose.

I grabbed a carton of candy Lifesavers, bailed out and gathered an armload of bazooka ammo. Blasted and wrecked equipment covered the beach. Big ships kept trying to punch through to unload. The surf was coming up, the nice day turned bitterly cold. I started back with the ammo and caught up with a group of men heading in the same direction. A trail of barrage caught up with us. I spotted a hole to my right, a rock-lined rifle pit only deep enough for one man. I hesitated, then decided against it. Another Marine jumped into it. I don't know whether the hole was mined or hit by mortar, but the explosion threw the Marine's helmeted head, right arm, neck and a portion of his chest into the air. His severed upper torso landed with open, dead eyes staring at me. The rest of him disappeared in a red, hazy mist. I learned long ago never to fall for an inviting hole, I almost made that mistake. From then on, I only dove into newly-exploded ones. Shells never land twice in the same hole, a still-smoking hole was free of booby traps.

I delivered the ammo rounds. The captain asked if I could get him more, also some water. I had five gallons in my tractor, so returned again to the beach. LSTs and LCMs were struggling to move in, some had been able to unload tanks. A few amphibs were trying to move up with supplies. The barrage was deafening, dirt and steel exploded in every direction. I ran, diving from hole to hole. Suddenly, I spotted the nose of an aerial bomb jutting through the sand. I looked around and saw another and another. The whole place was mined! I knew my weight wouldn't set off these big babies, but tanks or trucks would and they were moving up.

I momentarily set aside my original mission. I found a M1 Garand rifle and jammed it upright in the sand as a warning post. I ran from one hole to another gathering M1s and carbines, affixed the bayonets and stuck each one by a mine. Sappers were now crawling up the beach, laying out white cloth strips along a cleared path. I waved and caught their attention. I pointed to the marked bombs, they acknowledged with a wave.



'As I crossed the open area from the beach to the airfield to rejoin my unit, I saw a passing tractor strike a buried aerial bomb. Complete devastation almost always resulted in death for the entire crew. Of the men who went in the air, one landed right in front of me, a quivering mass of strawberry jam. He gasped a few times, then expired. There was nothing I could do. Just a few moments before, the tractor had pulled up and one of the crew yelled at me, asking where the 24th was. I was heading for the same unit and was tempted to ask for a ride but didn't. I motioned them to the right and toward the 24th located near the north end of the airfield. They swung the tractor, moved about twenty feet and struck the mine. To this day I feel responsible.'

I headed back toward the beach and my tractor. The silk shirt felt tight around my shoulders, but it helped ward off the cold. Another problem now plagued me. As a tractor man, I wasn't issued any leggings. With every step, gritty, black ash packed my shoes tight. I stopped near the beach to unlace my boots and noticed a fallen Marine who no longer needed his leggings. I sat down and emptied my shoes. It felt great to be barefoot, but not great enough to discard my shoes, a luxury I had enjoyed for only a short week. Size 15 boon dockers were hard to come by, even for the Marines. During the past six months, I had fought barefoot on Saipan. Lieutenant Joe Reece offered me a pass to the States, I refused, I could fight just as well with or without shoes. Fortunately, my boots arrived two days before we sailed for Iwo, otherwise I would have been left behind.

I put on my borrowed leggings, secured the five-gallon water can from my tractor and, out of curiosity, tried the radio again. A male voice identified himself as Moby Dick. He

A search through the Marine Corps photographic holdings at the US National Archives revealed this shot which Don Marshall recognised as the amtrac blown apart by the bomb. Don indicated the hole (arrowed) where he was sheltering when the bomb exploded.

REUNION OF HONOR
ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF IWO JIMA, AMERICAN AND JAPANESE VETERANS MET AGAIN ON THESE SAME SANDS, THIS TIME IN PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP.
WE COMMEMORATE OUR COMRADES, LIVING AND DEAD, WHO FOUGHT HERE WITH BRAVERY AND HONOR, AND WE PRAY TOGETHER THAT OUR SACRIFICES ON IWO JIMA WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED AND NEVER BE REPEATED.
FEBRUARY 19, 1985
3RD, 4TH, 5TH DIVISION ASSOCIATIONS, USMC AND THE ASSOCIATION OF IWO JIMA

'The Reunion of Honor memorial now stands where Marshall, leading stretcher bearers in his drawing, made numerous trips to recover wounded. Unexploded shell in picture was typical of type encountered along beach as were aerial bombs.'

described our landing, identified our units and then played popular American songs. This was too good an opportunity to miss for putting that damned Jap radio station to better use. I opened all the tractor's ports and turned up the volume full bore. From then on, Marines advanced through that living hell to the *Chatanooga Choo Choo*, *One O'Clock Jump* and all our other favourites. The music continued until the battery ran down. Turn about was fair play and I hope the troops enjoyed it.

I grabbed my five-gallon water can and started up the terrace. The Japs lobbed another heavy barrage, they never let up, just kept increasing it. Sand, rock, chunks of concrete, boat and tank pieces, helmets, back packs, flesh, viscera and bone fragments rained down as we huddled in the shell-holes. One Marine evaporated in a multicolored explosion, his body parts flew in all directions. His K-bar [combat knife], ripped from its sheath, whirred like an angry hornet corkscrewing through the air. It sliced the tip off a crouching Seabee's nose and laid open his cheek before burying its blade in the side of a crater where a Marine lay, his ankle and foot dangling from an elongated strip of muscle tissue.

He asked for help. I splinted it as best I could to a bayonet sheath and wrapped it tightly to restrict the bleeding. Dragging him behind, I crawled back to the beach and laid him beside my tractor. I figured the Japs knew the tractor was knocked out and no longer a threat, so wouldn't waste their shells on it.

A rather nice commander, whose name I don't remember other than it reminded me of tobacco, Phillip Morris or P. Lorrilard or Reynolds, etc., said he was a doctor, all his corpsmen were gone, could I help him put together an aid station? Of course I could and did. He set up and I dragged them in. A little later, Lieutenant Long barrelled into the hole. We now had about eight critical cases, a number of dead and seven or eight walking wounded. Long spotted an LCVP with its ramp down, unbroached and unhit, about a hundred feet away. He grabbed one of the wounded, helped him to the craft and ordered the LCVP crew to stand-by while we moved the rest of the wounded aboard. In spite of their wounds, those that were able helped and all were evacuated, one of the few evacuations that day to succeed.

Once again, I started back with the water. En route, I picked up a 12-gauge pump shotgun and joined up with the captain and his group. The water was gratefully received. We came under fire from a number of pillboxes, each resembled an evil-eyed crocodile winking an incessant stream of death. We kept up a continuous fire into the pillbox openings while a Marine crawled on top of one and tossed in either an explosive charge or a grenade. If he succeeded, we changed position and repeated the procedure against another emplacement. I was amazed by the way these men made it from one pillbox to another. They were not always successful. Their progress was slow, their casualties high. I pumped away with my shotgun on signal, each shot sent nine 32-caliber slugs into the apertures. Other Marines were better armed with M1s, carbines or BARs, but combined, we pumped a lot of slugs and kept the Japs pinned down.

A heavy mortar barrage inched its way up the slope toward us. Mortar fire had been intermittent earlier, but it now became a concerted effort and an efficient one. It pinned us down, a number of Marines were hit. The captain signalled us to resume fire. The slide of my 12-gauge jammed, a sliver of mortar shell had penetrated the right side of the breach. I threw it away and banged away with my .45 pistol, a worthless effort at 20 yards.

The grey marble monument carrying a message of peace in English and Japanese was dedicated on Iwo beach on February 19, 1985 — the 40th anniversary of the landing — by veterans of both sides. Major Robert E. Hoskins (Ret.), Ed Harlof, Colonel Walter J. Ridlon (Ret.) all of the US Marine Corps, and Reverend Wachi with Takeo Abe of the Association of Iwo Jima participated in the dedication. The bunker in the upper left of the photo is the same one as in the sketch done by Don Marshall in 1945. He had dragged two wounded into the shell-hole. Inspecting the bunker, he assumed all the occupants were dead, but one apparently was only stunned and, on wakening, shot and killed the corpsman who just arrived to help. Marshall killed the sniper with a grenade, then ran forward to retrieve more wounded. (Major R. E. Hoskins)

Don Marshall: 'I was going up to the lines by the airfield with grenades or bazooka ammo, I don't recall which. I jumped in a shell-hole to escape some incoming rounds. There were four Marines setting up an 81mm mortar. I asked if I could help. They said yes, they would appreciate it if I would set up marking stakes out front for them. The marking stakes (range markers) were, as I remember, the rods from 'clover leaf' 75mm ammo cases. I moved out front on my belly and planted stakes wherever they directed. When I got back they had the mortar set up on the plate and were dropping in rounds, calling numbers and adjusting. I stayed and watched, I can still hear that unforgettable, tunnel-like, hollow "whoomp" right now. After a few rounds they broke out a bottle of "Four Roses" whiskey and offered me a drink. We passed the bottle, all the while one of them would drop in another round. I joked about them possibly making a mistake and dropping in the whiskey bottle accidentally. Never happen they said. I left to continue forward. The following day I came back the same route. All the guys were torn apart by a direct hit. I picked up a shard of broken glass with a portion of the "Four Roses" label still glued to it — the centre portion part with the flowers on it. I felt bad and almost cried. I can still see them in action today, working hard, dropping in those shells and laughing. I think of them often.'

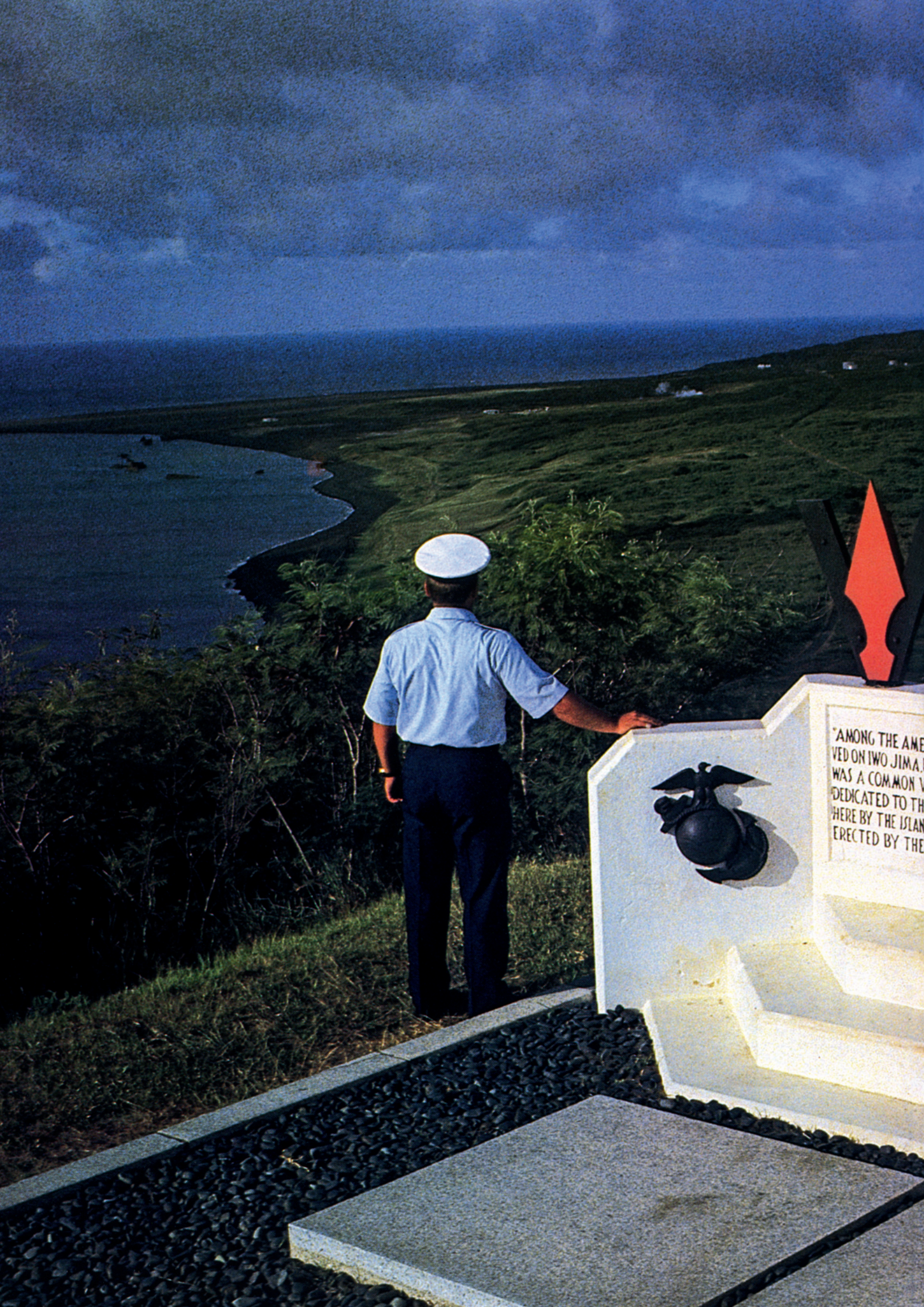
The captain yelled for me to get some more grenades. I raced out and found a hole beneath the edge of the airfield filled with Marine bodies, almost all had grenades attached to their belts. I filled up a gas mask bag and dragged it back. A sergeant asked me to get more, once again I headed for the beach.

I spotted a Thompson sub-machine gun lying in the sand next to a dead Navy man. I checked the piece over, it was in good condition. The stock was stencilled with BP (Beach Party). I slung the strap over my shoulder and started over the terrace. A work party of about 30 men were lined up passing boxes. A shell screamed in, they disappeared in a massive explosion, I flew up and backwards some twenty feet. I landed on my face and knees near the water. The blast knocked the wind out of me, I tried to breathe, but inhaled only black sand. I coughed and gasped for another breath. A hand grabbed my Thompson shoulder strap and pulled me, still gasping, to my feet.

I stared at what was left of the work party, a mass of jellied arms, legs and torsos, not a whole body left in the entire group. Tears streamed down my face. I coughed, cried and blubbered all at the same time. I felt someone guide me toward an LCVP (Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel aka Higgins boat), one of the few that made it ashore without broaching. The ramp was down waiting to take on the wounded, a quickly devised system and the best that could be done under the circumstances. Someone pushed me aboard, three more wounded came on. As the ramp was raised, shells bracketed the boat. One of the wounded men disappeared off the side. A crewman secured the ramp while the coxswain backed off the beach. As he manoeuvred to turn, we took two more close hits, one perforated the craft, the other barely missed the coxswain.

A trip back to the beach for more grenades resulted in Marshall getting knocked unconscious by the same shell that wiped out this working party. He was pulled aboard a Higgins boat, one of the few left undamaged or swamped. It was soon to be hit by shell-fire when the rudder jammed at an angle, and it began to drift out of control toward almost certain capture by Japanese forces.

Marshall and a Marine (in sketch) were heading in the direction of the airfield. A mortar explosion peppered Marshall and took the major portion of the other man's head. The body remained frozen in an upright position until next day. On his return, Marshall covered it with a poncho.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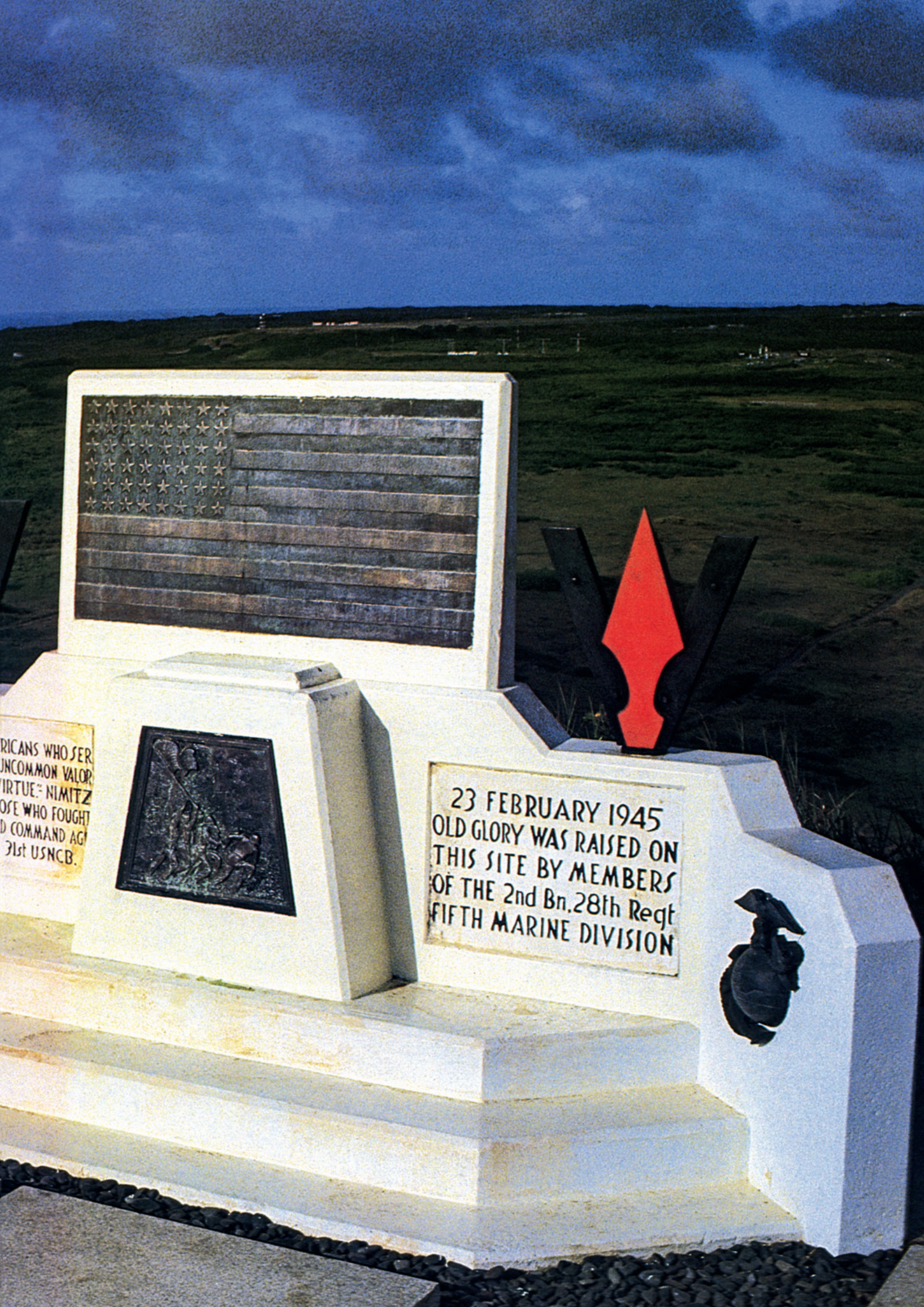
RICANS WHO SER
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OSE WHO FOUGHT
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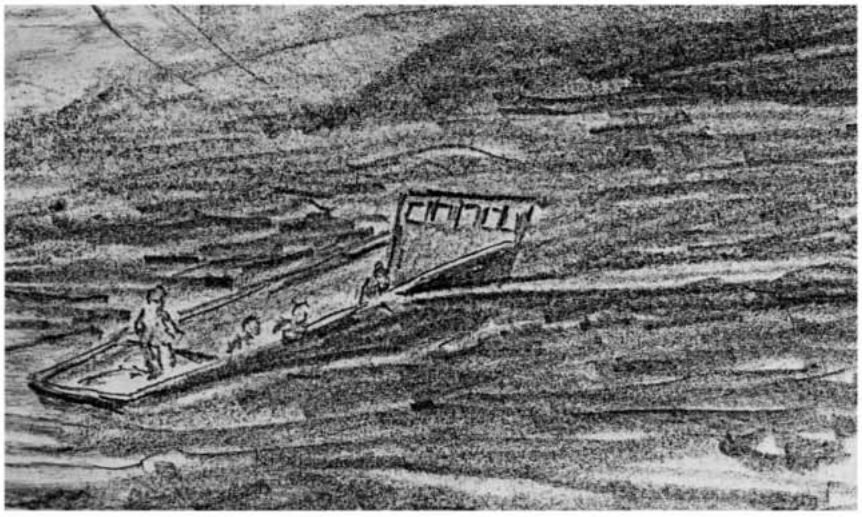
OLD GLORY WAS RAISED ON
THIS SITE BY MEMBERS
OF THE 2nd Bn. 28th Regt
FIFTH MARINE DIVISION



Don Marshall describes these sketches as follows: 'LCVP (Higgins boat) dead in the water and drifting toward certain capture on Tachiiwa point. Captured Marines were never found alive and their deaths usually came slowly. Marshall vowed not to be taken, he was the only one armed. An attempt to swim, crawl and wade along the rocky, surf-pounded shore toward friendly lines would probably (almost certainly) have ended in failure but the Navy men wanted to go with him anyway. Rescue by an LCM came just in time.'

The LCVP headed out to sea with a shot-up hull, shift lever jammed in low gear and a rudder wedged tight at a slight angle. The crew kept the engine running, if the bilge pumps stopped we would sink. We kept chugging along away from the beach in a large, lazy arc toward the left and to the north.

Ships, landing craft and amphibious tractors hustled in every direction to and from the inferno on shore, too busy to take notice of our puny, disabled vessel. I finally came to my senses, coughed up and spat out the last of the sand. I asked where we were heading and could I be carried to my own LST? The two Navy men said it was a great idea, but impossible to do with a jammed rudder and no cutting torch to make repairs . . . all of us were in the same boat, so to speak, with only one option, continue on in hopes of attracting someone's attention.

We now sailed about halfway through the apogee of our arc, still heading northward. Night fell. In the darkness, we could feel the water rising around our ankles. From what I remembered of the island's topography, I estimated we would eventually make landfall somewhere around Tachiiwa Point, a Japanese stronghold. The sky clouded over, enveloping us in complete darkness. The weather turned icy cold. With great satisfaction we watched our battlewagons pump shells into the dark island. Their huge guns belched fire, sometimes we caught glimpses of red-hot shells arching over our heads. We hoped each one slammed into the heart of Japanese installations.

Our elation was cut short by the burst of a parachute flare almost directly above our heads. Its greenish glare meant it was Japanese. They were concerned about our landing craft sneaking up on their rear. In reality, we were sitting ducks. Had they known our true situation, they would have laughed themselves silly. We felt like we were on Christmas display in Macy's store window. The brilliant glare also revealed how dangerously close we were to the rocky shores of Tachiiwa Point and, much to our discomfort, a Japanese patrol hurrying around and over those rocks toward a small beach where we were drifting.

The flare dropped into the cold water and flickered out with a hiss. We considered our options which, at best, seemed very bleak. Turning off the engines to halt also meant turning off the pumps, a guarantee of sinking in ice-cold water. To leave the engines on would drive us ashore and thereby deliver us into the eager hands of the waiting patrol. The coxswain and his buddy dove for the engine room. The rest of us stayed on the open deck, hoping against hope that the cursing and pounding men below succeeded in freeing the twisted and blocked linkage. Their efforts proved useless. As they came topside, covered with bilge oil and shivering with cold, another flare burst with a hollow, popping sound.

I noticed one of men from below held a flashlight. I suggested he use it to signal the ships that had been lobbing shells over our heads. Maybe one of them might get curious and attempt our rescue. The flashlight barely threw a beam, its batteries almost exhausted. Nevertheless, the Navy man raised it over the gunnel and continuously blinked out an SOS, the only code signal any of us knew.

Another enemy flare burst about five minutes later, its light illuminated the small beach some few hundreds yards off with the Japanese patrol ready and waiting for our inevitable delivery into their hands. They held their fire, though we presented easy targets. They couldn't miss us at that short distance. They wanted prisoners. I knew, once the interrogation was over, all of us would be killed. The bodies of Marine captives were usually found gruesomely butchered.

I clenched my Thompson, determined to go down kicking and scratching, taking as many as I could. Another flare gave me a glimmer of hope. A few days ago, I had studied our maps and recon photos. I knew our exact location, about a mile and a half from our own forces on Blue Beach 2. If we avoided the high cliff behind the beach and stayed in or near the water, we might succeed in clawing southward along the shore, through the rock quarry and the boat basin to our own lines. It was a dumb idea, at best.

The Japs continued firing flares at three to five minute intervals. By the fifth or sixth flare, we were caught in the ground swell. The Japs were waving. The flare hissed out. I pulled the bolt on my Thompson, we bobbed slowly shoreward in total darkness while island-ripping salvos screamed overhead. We heard the unmistakable thrumming of a nearby engine. Friend or foe? Impossible to see through the darkness.

One of the men whispered, 'It's ours, they're coming to get us.' 'Like hell they are,' I said, 'Those are Japs.'

Out of the gloom, a voice called out, 'Hey, you guys, where the hell are you?'

I knew the Japs were setting us up and warned, 'Don't answer 'em, it's a trick.'

We waited in silence, our engine dead, caught in the ground swell and sinking, each of us determined to go down fighting.

Again, out of the darkness, we heard the voice. 'Well, fuck'em. If they don't want to get picked up, let's get the hell out of here!' the unmistakable jargon of an American seaman.

'Hey! Here we are!' Fortuitously the men ignored my previous caution for silence and I, too, joined in their wild shouting.

The LCM (Landing Craft, Mechanized, twice the size of our Higgins boat) raced in, threw a line to our nearly submerged craft, backed off rapidly and pulled us out of range. We watched another Japanese flare go off, it shone down on an empty expanse of dark water. Did they ever figure out whether their sitting ducks were sunk or saved?

The rescue crew hauled us aboard soaked, but safe, then cut the line to our swamped LCVP. Shivering uncontrollably in the rising wind, stinging mist and rain, we presented a logistical problem to the crew. Now that they had us, what to do with us? The Japanese flares, not our feeble SOS signals, alerted the entire battle fleet to an impending engagement. Only by accident had some sharp-eyed crewman spotted our little, broken-down, sinking craft bobbing in an unauthorised area off the enemy shore.

An immediate fleet black-out prevailed, fantail smoke pots were lit. Our LCM was caught in the middle as huge battleships

'Lack of tractors due to combat loss resulted in Marshall going directly to front after release from the APA *Bayfield*. The Japanese were infiltrating behind our lines via the elaborate tunnel system. Pilots strafing complained they could see only one army — the Marines — as the enemy was always out of sight underground.'

'Sniper Pass Road. Photo shows three prisoners crouched alongside road while Marine keeps wary eye on slope. Marshall, shown center of second picture, took no prisoners.'

steamed toward predetermined positions. We dodged huge, zig-zagging black shapes looming out of the dark. Again, we were where we shouldn't be . . . in the middle of an air raid and a fleet avoiding Japanese aircraft bombs. We lost a carrier. For the next four or five hours, we lived in absolute terror. In fact, frozen terror, for we were still soaking wet.

At long last, our rescuers contacted an APA (Attack Transport) and transferred us aboard. The *Bayfield*'s crew immediately attended to our minor wounds, supplied hot coffee laced with brandy, put us at ease and into the sack. I refused to let go of my Thompson, in spite of their reassurances, until a Marine guard guaranteed he would watch over it.

I awoke five hours later. A different guard stood duty. With a wide grin, he handed over my Thompson, newly cleaned and oiled, almost unrecognisable from the rusty piece of junk I earlier relinquished. I went back up on deck and immediately headed toward a Marine standing at the rail looking through binoculars at the devastation on shore. I tapped him on the shoulder and asked if he knew where I could catch a boat back to the beach. The officer asked why. I explained I had mistakenly been shuffled off and needed to get back to my outfit, though at the moment no one seemed to know where it was. I figured the beach was a good place to start and, if I couldn't find my unit, I'd join up with another.

Suddenly, two hard objects dug into my back. They were the muzzles of Thompsons, held by General Clifton Cates' personal bodyguards. It was General Cates (commander of the 4th Marine Division) whom I had just brashly confronted! He made a written notation of my name and unit, motioned to a runner and ordered me to stand by.

The APA *Bayfield* was a beehive of activity, a constant stream of boats flowed back and forth bringing in the wounded. I stepped aside and waited as unobtrusively as possible. A runner sped to the General's side. The General exchanged a few words, then signalled me. I stepped forward.

He told me to go with the runner, a boat was waiting and, 'For God's sake, get rid of that white shirt!'

I scampered down the cargo net and jumped aboard an LCVP. The boat, manned by a coxswain and one crewman, roared away.

'Where to?'

'The beach.'

Both men looked shoreward at the smoke-covered, exploding shoreline, the roaring, flaming wreckage. They stared at me in disbelief, only an idiot would voluntarily go back into that inferno.

'Oh, Gawd!' one of them moaned, expressing both their sentiments.

Neither one seemed happy about their assignment, but obviously, if General Cates ordered it, then it was vitally important they deliver me directly onto that hell-begotten, exploding piece of real estate. By God, come hell or high water, they'd get me safely ashore!

For the first time, I felt I was a tremendously important Marine and rose admirably to the occasion as we neared the beach. I instructed them to lower the ramp only enough for me to make it over the top, then ordered them to get the hell out of there. They squeezed in between the wreckage, I leaped over, they gratefully sped off.

Thus, I made a one-man invasion of Iwo Jima. Blue Beach was even more chaotic than before, completely covered with blasted wreckage, landing craft thrown on top of half-buried tanks, 105mm cannons toppled off broken landing ramps. As far as the eye could see, each ocean wave delivered a solid sheet of torn bodies, clothing, papers, photographs of loved ones, tins of food, stretchers, life-rafts. The terrific pounding kept our beachhead pinned down. The fleet's constant bombardment inland gave us a little bit of relief.

I picked through the rubble, gathering grenades to take back to the 25th, then crawled up the terrace alongside several tanks plowing forward under heavy fire. As I reached the airfield, I bypassed the blasted pillboxes. They presented a constant danger, each connected to a system of underground tunnels, giving snipers access to our rear flanks. Crippled airplanes, pushed off the field in jumbled masses, hid protective tunnels from which snipers frequently changed positions. We learned early on to lay quietly in out-of-the-way positions, hold our fire until we spotted a movement in the wreckage. Unobtrusive junk, a discarded box or a blanket rag casually tossed over the side of a mound invariably concealed a rifle port. The Japs continually re-occupied these camouflaged traps and restocked them with grenades.

Left: **Relief unit moving up along Sniper Pass Road.** *Right:* **The current road leads to the north portion of the island and US Coast Guard base. Much of Iwo is dotted with memorials placed closest to where known units were wiped out, by Reverend Wachi (who died in 1990), the former garrison commander on the island, later president of the Iwo Jima Association.**

Hill 382 lay on the eastern edge of Airfield No. 2 (Motoyama) and Lieutenant Colonel Takeichi Nishi had sited tanks in revetments on the western slope to cover the approach to the airfield. *Above:* A Light Tank Type 95 'Ha-Go' and *right* a Medium Type 97 'Chi-Ha' — the later modified version with the long 47mm gun in an enlarged turret. Don Marshall recalls that 'only five tanks managed to crawl from their places of concealment and three were quickly dispatched by ground troops. The remainder were finished off by 20mm fire from two planes that happened to be overhead.' (NA)

Days and nights became a blur of exploding shells and zinging bullets. I found a Marine buddy, Private Thurman Mott, and shared his hole for the night. One man to a hole invited sure death or capture, infiltrators were on the increase. We ate our K rations and bedded down out of the cold wind and rain. The base of the hole radiated heat from Iwo's active volcano. We could hear hot magma constantly shifting far below, another worrisome danger, but we welcomed the warmth it provided.

Try as we might, neither one of us succeeded in staying awake. I suddenly awoke with hands gripping my throat. A Jap was kneeling over me, his knees straddling my chest. I tried to grab my .45 automatic out of my shoulder holster, but his leg blocked me, I couldn't break his death grip. I cocked my knees and slammed him in the rump. The blow knocked him off balance and he sprawled forward. Pulling out my pistol as I rolled over, I took aim but he had vanished into the darkness. Mott slept soundly on.

The next day, while still in a rearguard position at the airfield, I ran into an old buddy, Corporal B. K. Eagan, from Neskoro, Wisconsin. Behind us, enemy snipers set up a continuous fire. Above us, a Marine Corsair swooped down for a brutal strafing run. A speeding line of blazing, ground-chewing bullets headed straight for us. We dove for cover. Unbeknown to us at the time, the enemy had sneaked in during the night and moved our white-cloth, front line marking strips to our rear. Fortunately, their clever ploy to turn our deadly strafing runs against our own forces failed.

Eagan and I moved forward, continually blasting away at re-occupied bunkers. Behind us, a Marine, wildly yelling and waving his arms, ran straight for us. We prepared for the worst, his frantic signalling warned us of another deadly attack against our rear flanks. He ran within earshot, yelling and pointing, 'The flag! The flag!' Every head turned to Mount Suribachi. There, barely discernible, flew a small flag, the Stars and Stripes.

Our firing slowed, men cheered. Hundreds of ships set up a cacophony of shrill whistles amid the constant din of exploding shells and screaming bullets. The noise was music to our ears! Suribachi had fallen! Our backs would be protected! With our spirits replenished by a few moments of exhilaration, we once again took up the business of killing. Our high-flying flag infuriated the enemy, their vengeance increased ten-fold.

The 3rd Division moved in and pushed up the island's centre. The 5th continued fighting on the west side, as did the 4th on the east.

And it was on March 4 that Sergeant Bill Genaust was killed. Don Marshall explains: 'At the time, I knew nothing of the drama of the flag-raising except that the Jap position of Suribachi had fallen. Sergeant Genaust stood side by side with Joe Rosenthal when the replacement flag was raised, and managed to capture, in motion on film, the same scene that Rosenthal got with his still shot *(see page 15).* **When unable to shoot pictures because of weather, cameraman Genaust doubled as a rifleman. The sergeant and a comrade were killed by a Japanese squad in a bypassed cave. Genaust, who wanted to fight, enlisted at age 36. He was wounded at Saipan, recommended for the Navy Cross, got the Purple Heart and two Bronze Star medals and died at the age of 38.'**

Above: **We found these two pictures by Private Bob Campbell in the National Archives, simply captioned: 'Hill 382, scene of cave area where Genaust was killed', but look at the name on the rear of the belt of the Marine on the right. Could this be Bill Genaust himself, photographed by his colleague, moments before he entered the cave? Bob Campbell was only 15 feet away when Genaust was struck by a burst of automatic fire at point-blank range: 'I could readily see the bullets cut him down', wrote Campbell later. 'Bill met his death through helping, beyond the call of duty, others who were in a huge cave on the south-west slope of Hill 365' (sic). The cave was blasted shut by Marines, the body buried under tons of earth. It was never recovered. (NA)**

Left: **'A 7.7mm heavy machine gun, Type 92, in emplacement near Hill 382', Don Marshall explains in his caption to this sketch. 'This position and its two occupants had given us much trouble until one Marine found a rear opening. I still have one of the 30-round brass ammunition clips (seen under the tripod).' A similar weapon is now on display in one of several bunkers converted to that use** *(right).* **Photo by Charles Peffer who served with the Coast Guard on Iwo in 1984.**

I stayed with the 4th and alternated between the 23rd and 25th. It was virtually impossible to keep track of units or even know their present situation. Word trickled down, we lost 2,500 men on Day 1 and one battalion lost 19 officers. The 23rd command post was wiped out.

Tanks and tractors moved up, bringing with them an unwelcome storm of enemy fire and a much-welcomed supply of food, water and ammo. Each delivery brought a sense of elation. Once the supplies were unloaded, we wished the tanks and tractors were someplace else.

Japanese artillery spared nothing on the beach, every incoming and outgoing LST, LCM, and LCVT (Landing Craft, Vehicle Tracked) faced a blasting rain of terror. All day and all night, star shells lit up the beach, rocks and wreckage. Flares swung to and fro, distorting and animating ground shadows into movements of enemy infiltrators. Exhausted Marines continually blasted away at these fleeting menaces.

A beginning of order began to emerge out of the chaos. At night, no one left his hole for any reason, to do so was to die. Pre-arranged passwords came down the line, the first night's reply was any American city except Chicago, the second night, any American automobile except Ford.

After a wakeful night, word reached the line that the 5th Amph Tracs had established a command post somewhere on the beach — I set out in search of it. The day was warm and sunny. On my way back to the beach, I came across an acquaintance, Glenn Pyle. I needed water, he asked me into his hole. I sat down and we exchanged bits of news. He offered me food and extended his canteen but a sniper's bullet blasted it from his hand, then sliced the handle off my GI spoon. I used that spoon for the rest of the campaign, I could cup my thumb in the bowl very nicely and it took no room at all in my pocket. I fell asleep and awoke with a badly sunburned face and cracked lips.

I left my friend and headed out. I found the 5th Amph Trac command post, reported to Lieutenants Reece and Malcolm and gave them written confirmation of my previous whereabouts. Though the tractors suffered a high attrition rate, luckily only a few of our men were wounded or killed. As a result, we now had more drivers and crewmen than tractors. This enabled us to supplement the ranks of the more forward units, which I had been doing, anyway.

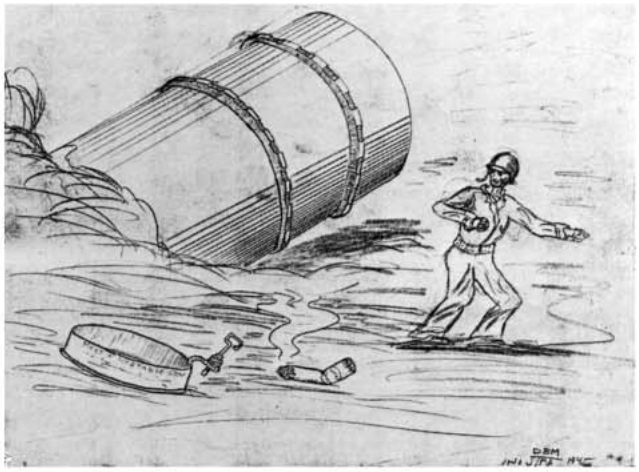
Several of us were ordered to establish a perimeter along the rock quarry on Blue Beach 2. There we found three crippled, abandoned Japanese LSMs. We selected one and mounted a .30-caliber air-cooled machine gun on its deck. The vessel's steel planking offered excellent protection, so a group of us, including Stan Gienko, Bob Hoover, B. K. Eagan and Mel Minke, moved inside. We set up a small cooking area and laundry, taking advantage of a large, water-filled shell-hole alongside. Volcanic heat kept the water constantly boiling, affording us clean clothes and warm food. Four Japs infiltrated the first night. Our sentry only got off one shot before his machine gun jammed. One of the Japs panicked, detonated his satchel charge and blew all of them into oblivion.

From its day of conception, the 5th Amph Tracs were a hodgepodge, bastard outfit, always shunted from pillar to post, always waiting for supplies to catch up.

Lieutenant P. K. Plakis constantly reminded us: 'Men, remember we are at war. We are at war with the US Navy. We are at war with the US Army. We are at war with the Marine Corps and last, but not least, we are at war with the Japanese.'

His philosophy proved accurate more times than I care to remember, especially when it came to food. Scavenging became second

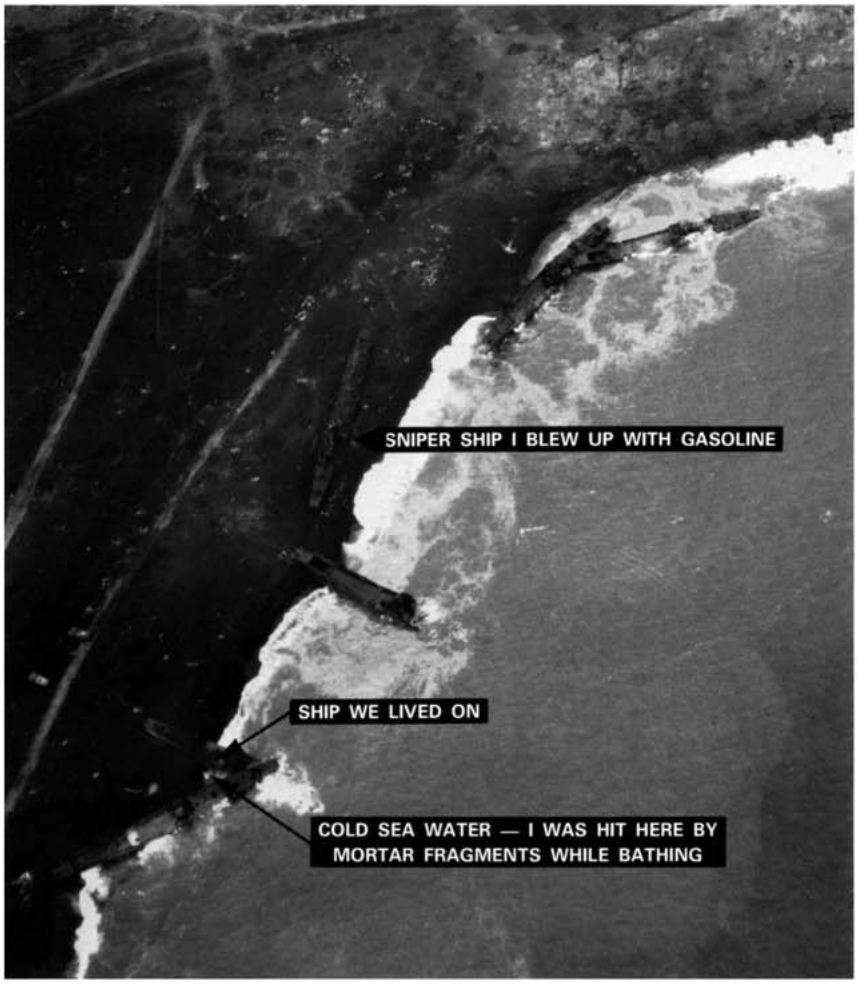
Left: **'With this sketch I indulged in a little whimsey. Four or five of us spent a cold night in a warm-bottomed shell-hole (heated up due to volcanic action). Heavy fire continued most of the night. At the slow light of dawn, we awoke to find that an unexploded 75mm shell had slid over the edge of the crater and burrowed into the bottom of our sanctuary. We were afraid to move for fear it would detonate by jarring but we were equally concerned that the thermal heat would do the same. The longer I lay looking at it, the larger the thing appeared to grow or the smaller and more insignificant it seemed I became. At length, we all decided to go out at the same moment on different sides. As I emerged, I came across a ripped-off human arm partially clad in Marine dungaree sleeve. There was no body anywhere near and none of us in the hole had been hit. It was a mystery.'** *Right:* **Today shells of all shapes and sizes are still recovered — compare with proportions of the five-gallon buckets in the background. (C. C. Peffer)**



Snapshots of life aboard the wrecked Japanese LSM. Don Marshall: 'Impromptu stove set-up *(left)* **on ash-covered deck brought hungry Marines from all directions. Admiral Raymond A. Spruance and staff even came aboard. I am crouching in rear after having had a shower from an improvised fresh water rig** *(right)*. **Earlier in the week I received a third wound at about the same spot as the seated Marine.'**

nature. The men of the 5th were good, clean-cut Americans trained to survive, whether it be kill, steal, beg, or connive to gain the edge. Souvenir hunting provided that edge. Any bartered souvenir meant quick access to food, booze, clothing or cash, the latter least important. A Jap rifle carried to the beach while the Navy ships unloaded was worth four eggs or six potatoes. A Japanese 77mm light machine gun Type 99 went for a gallon of 190 proof medicinal alcohol. Flags were exchanged for bread or cash. Other enemy pieces held set values as well, with swords the most valuable of all.

Those of us aboard our private beached yacht foraged daily for trading material. Our ship soon earned a fine reputation for hot food, coffee and, when available, beer and liquor at no charge to members of the 5th Amphibs. The only exception was the time Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, in overall command of the Iwo campaign, Admiral Davis and their Marine guard toured Blue Beach 2. Corporal John Shuflata, on deck making coffee, called out, 'Welcome aboard, Admiral.' Noticing Rear Admiral Davis



Above: **These wrecked ships lay at the northern end of Blue Beach 2, more or less in the East Boat Basin. Don Marshall has annotated which ship was which in this aerial photograph taken on February 22. (NA)**

Below: **'Samson, a Japanese dog, took readily to C Company after his capture by Sergeant Bill Kennedy on Saipan. He became a model US citizen and quickly learned how to steal full cans of beer from Marines' weekly rations. Samson came ashore with 5th Amph Tracs and took to guarding the ship. He not only challenged all strangers, Japanese infiltrators included, he once rashly defied the Fifth Fleet commander, Admiral Spruance. For this, Samson was officially reprimanded.'**

[Chief of Staff], Shuflata commented, 'I don't believe I know your friend.'

Spruance introduced his friend, to which John replied, 'Ah, yes, a good man. I've read about him. Care for a cup of Joe?'

The Admiral inspected our wrecked ship, then bade us a cordial goodbye. John responded, 'It's been a pleasure, Sir. Come back again anytime, Sir.' He paused, then added, 'Oh, and bring your friend, too.'

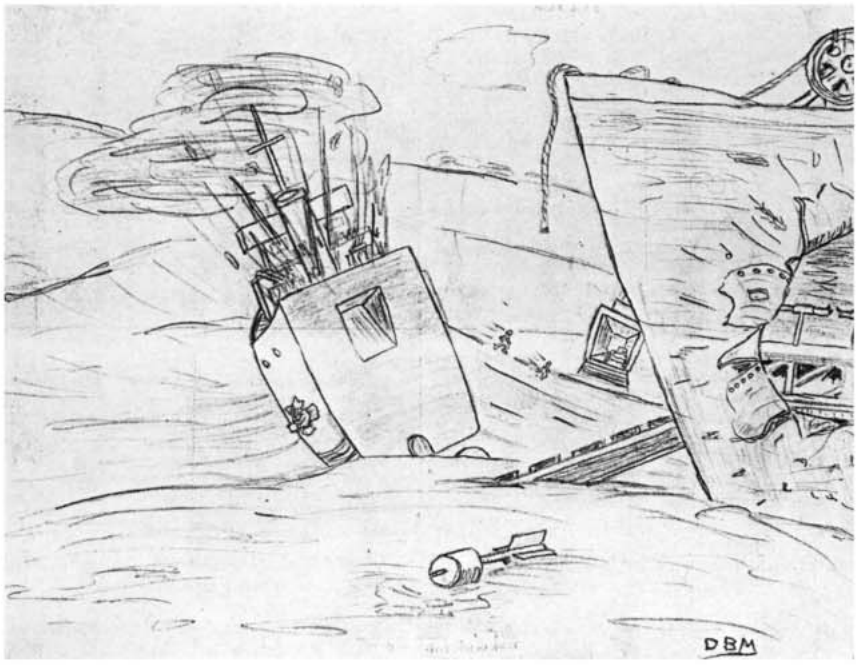
Meantime, 5th Division men blasted their way up the island's west side, closing more than 5,000 bunkers, pillboxes and tunnels in their area alone. Our men above the quarry and in the Charlie Dog Ridge came under heavy fire from an enemy position somewhere on East Beach. Blue Beach 1 and 2 took a steady pounding. Snipers and infiltrators continually plagued our position aboard the wrecked ship. One of our drivers, Pfc Harry Mullin, was killed.

The 5th Amph Tracs volunteered on a daily basis to relieve the men in more forward units. Lieutenant Malcolm asked me to try and take out the snipers in our immediate vicinity. I leaped at the chance, I had a pretty good hunch where they were holed up. Directly ahead of our wrecked Jap ship, which stranded stern first, another one laid parallel to the beach. The third, also parallel and the most suspect, sat about 200 yards east in a sort of no man's land.

I asked George 'Pete' Zarris to come with me and the two of us boarded the vessel. I heard the Japs inside and we debated the best way to get them. I would be too exposed if I scaled the smoke stack and dropped down grenades. We finally decided I would cover the main deck and hatches with my Thompson while Zarris searched the beach for some gasoline. He returned in about ten minutes with a full jerrycan. I poured its contents down the open hatch, unaware the ship's fuel tanks were ruptured. I tossed in a lighted torch. The deadly mixture exploded, blowing both of us skyward a good ten feet, then dumped us back on deck. We ran for the rail and dived over.

The ship burned for three days, creating a dense smoke screen which forced our Navy to change firing positions, as I later learned from Lieutenant Malcolm. Sniping from that location ceased.

On Sunday, I was ordered to report to the 24th near Charlie Dog Ridge, now a gateway to the heart of the island and the second airfield. The casualties were high up there. Their CO had been killed, the men needed a rest, our group would hold for them. When we reached the area, one particular fumarole, of which there were many, caught my attention.



'Home base established aboard Japanese LSM (extreme right showing hole in side). Center of sketch shows me and Marine Pete Zarris running from the explosion I caused to eliminate snipers. Escaping Japanese were easily picked off. Vessel burned for three days and heavy smoke caused Navy to shift firing positions. Lieutenant "Spike" Malcolm: "Dammit Marshall, I told you just to kill those snipers, not to blow up the whole ship." Marshall replied: "Lieutenant, I'm getting paid two dollars a day and I wanted to be sure I earned my money." '

Two tomato plants were growing alongside of it with two luscious, red, ripe, tomatoes. Manna from Heaven! Walt Pfister and Bert Gustafson wouldn't touch them with a ten-foot pole, they were classical Japanese poisoned bait. All the more for me and I ate both with a great deal of enjoyment.

In the same area, I found a pair of the most elegant, soft, brown leather, English riding boots I had ever seen. Though I steered clear of them, the memory of such strange objects in the midst of a war-torn Pacific island remains clear to this day.

Upon reflection, I feel certain they belonged to Lieutenant Colonel Baron Takeichi Nishi, a superb horseman, a 1932 Olympic equestrian gold medal winner and international playboy. This brilliant Samurai warrior commanded the 26th Tank Regiment and fought on to the end. He also was responsible for the brutal death of more than one captured Marine.

We crawled forward through an area of sparse straggly trees, kunai grass, craggy rocks, small ravines and canyons. A number of huge boulders, their insides carved out like pumpkins, contained gun ports. Enemy bullets zinged in every direction. I and another Marine headed to the right toward heavy firing from a broad opening between two gulleys that converged in a 'V', Crawling forward, he took the right ravine, I the left.

I bellied through the grass, unaware that as the 'V' widened, it also separated us. At length, the firing lessened. The day was heavily overcast. The deep bub-bub of American machine guns seemed more distant than the sharp tat-tat-tat of Japanese guns. I realised I had gone too far. I tried to get my bearings, to determine which way led to our lines.

'Rugged rocks, some hollowed-out like pumpkins, concealed Japanese. Hidden trails, gullies and canyons contained a myriad of positions designed to conceal one man while killing another. Did we have them trapped on the island or did they have us trapped? I pitched two grenades, one a phosphorus, into this position to destroy Japs. Unknown Marine advances cautiously.'

It was this photo taken by Coastguardsman Charles Peffer that caused Marshall to resurrect his long-forgotten sketches made during idle hours on South Pacific islands. Numerous drawings, many made by candlelight with Japanese pens, pencils and paper, have been lost or misplaced through the years but those remaining, when compared to current island scenes, are remarkable.

The entire area was hotly contested by both sides, the battle line fluctuated back and forth almost hourly. I crouched low and crawled onward through the ravine. Every so often I heard a nearby peculiar sounding whoomp, a sound impossible to identify as either friend or foe. I spotted several Japanese behind a large rock servicing a strange type of mortar. I now know it was a spigot mortar.

I mentally noted its location and crawled on, still hopelessly lost. The gully opened into a clearing strewn with wreckage and bodies, its barren, flat expanse offered no cover. As I inched forward, I saw a head bobbing behind a sharp, jutting rock on the far bank of the defile. I laid flat, belly down, on top of my Thompson between two rotting, putrid Japanese bodies. I skewed my helmet so that its strap crossed over my nose and covered one eye. I lay waiting as if dead.

Five Japanese, with heads kept down, descended along the pathway and paused about twenty yards away. They wore Marine dungarees and helmets and carried M1 rifles. The last man wore regular Japanese trousers and leg wrappings. One pointed at me, they conversed, another picked up a baseball-sized rock and threw it hard against my back. I lay still as death. They continued on in the direction from which I had come. I played dead, laying in the decaying gore for at least another hour before crawling into a rocky niche.

'. . . I laid flat, belly down, on top of my Thompson between two rotting, putrid Japanese bodies . . . I lay waiting as if dead . . . '

'I was stunned when I saw the picture you obtained from the National Archives in Washington, No. 111099. I was actually on the ridge on the left returning from the fiasco of stabbing the already-dead sentry. It had taken me some time to get that far but the weather was already beginning to clear up. I looked down from the heights and was certainly glad to see the guys again moving up. One of them gave me a cigar. As I recall there were three tanks with them and one got hit. This was somewhere near Nishi village. When I got back, Major George Shead (commanding 5th Amph Tracs) stated to no one in particular but was overheard by Private Joe Casillas: "That dumb SOB," he grumbled. "Don't know whether to give him a medal or a court-martial." '

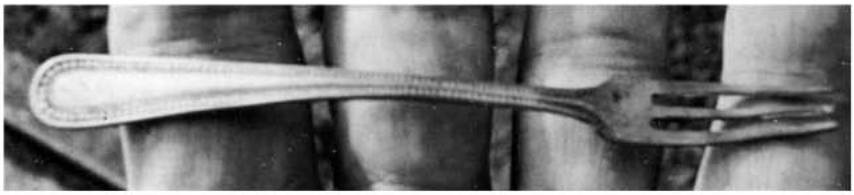
Safely concealed from the enemy, I pondered my next move. I was covered with gore, the stench was overpowering, more so than at any time before on Iwo or Saipan. Bodies decompose rapidly under bright sunlight, not from the heavy overcast which had disorientated me. Despite the grey day, I was sweating heavily. Then I realised Iwo's hot volcanic ground was slowly cooking those two mangled bodies. I bolted out, vaulting over rocks, not caring if the enemy saw me.

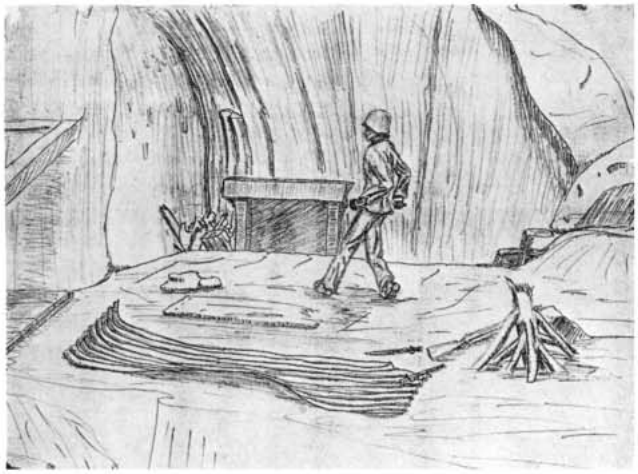
I became more confused than ever. Any direction was a gamble. I kept to the small gullies and grass cover. I reached a walled, concrete ramp leading downward into the mouth of a large cave about thirty feet below. The protective walls were also concrete, not the usual rock. I studied the cave. It, too, was concrete. A castellated wall, slightly above ground level, guarded the entrance. A Jap sentry sat in one of the wall's recesses, peering intently down a narrow rock canyon.

Obviously I had stumbled upon an important enemy installation and concluded that the Jap sentry was watching for a Marine attack. The direction in which he was peering was the direction I needed to go. Though I watched and waited for about a half-hour, I saw no movement. It puzzled me. The installation was some type of headquarters or important supply centre. It should show signs of activity, not just a single sentry.

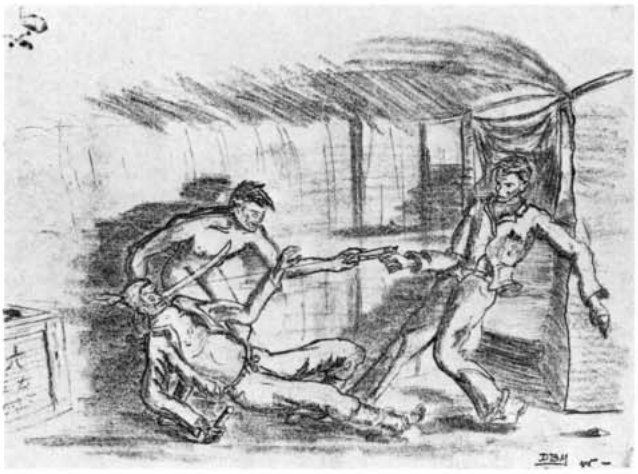
There was no way to proceed without detection, so I decided to eliminate the sentry. Carefully crawling in a half-circle to avoid the cave and the Japs inside, I kept my eye on the sentry's back. He took no notice of me, he concentrated solely on the canyon. I sneaked to within five feet of him, leapt up, cupped my hand over his mouth and shoved my K-bar deep below his third rib, midway between his shoulder blade and spine. It was a perfect kill.

I pulled the body aside only to discover I just killed an already dead Jap. How he originally died remains a mystery, I found no tell-tale mark. I felt about as dumb as they come. I had spent at least 45 minutes stalking an enemy sentry intently peering down the canyon with dead eyes. I searched his pockets and found only a tiny, three-tined brass pickle fork, which I still have. I hightailed it down the canyon and worked my way back to our lines. It was further than I anticipated, during my absence they had fallen back somewhat.





'Caves were not as easy to blast shut as many people thought. Some had to be repeatedly hit with explosives or flame-throwers. This one had several passages, Corporal John Shuflata pitching grenade to myself inside and out of sight. Shortly after these occupants were dispatched, the area was blanketed with mortar shells. I found one large cave packed with torpedo warheads, another adjoining it with hundreds of bags of rice.'



'Japanese had to be flushed out by hand when no other means were available. Caves were extremely hot and many defenders wore little or no clothing. Soldier with Katana (standard fighting sword) swung at me. Killing blow was thwarted by blade hitting cave wall, I then wrestled and killed him with my .45 automatic. First Jap was killed with one shot to head, others further in hurled back grenades until "short-fuzed".'

I returned to our post on the beach, turned in a report to Lieutenant Malcolm and reported my sighting of the strange mortar, though I had difficulty pinpointing its exact location on the map. In any event, a rocket company made note of my information, though I don't know if they successfully knocked it out.

I stripped off my stinking, gore-caked clothes, wired them together and lowered the putrid bundle into the boiling shell hole. The first time we washed our clothes in this manner, we hung them over the ship's cable to dry. Apparently our washline infuriated the enemy, they let loose with a barrage of mortar shells. We never used the cables again for for that purpose.

A fresh, sea-water pool had formed between our wrecked Jap ship and the nearby parallel one. Stark naked, I jumped in. The cold, clear water felt great. I washed off the dirt and smell, climbed out and rubbed down. I finger-dried between my toes, it felt terrific. It had been a week or ten days since I last took off my shoes. A short distance away, a big shell exploded — it sounded like a 81mm mortar. I dove for cover. No more followed. It was the only one to hit in our area and no doubt a stray.

When I stood up, I saw blood covering my foot. A piece of shrapnel had sliced the bottom of my arch as slick as a razor. I washed and dressed the deep gash. Two days later, I felt a strange sensation in my leg and found a bright red line running up between my foot and calf. I found a corpsman and received a handful of sulfa tablets. After taking the prescribed dosage, one every four hours, the problem disappeared.

Good and bad news started trickling in. We now controlled about half the island. Roads had been installed from the beach and over the terraces. Fewer supplies were lost in the surf. The beach shelling of LSMs and LSDs (Landing Ship, Dock) lessened. Engel Bergsied, whom we thought dead, was found alive on a hospital ship by his twin brother, John. Though the twin's parents in Minnesota received notice of Engel's death, John refused to give up hope.

The wreckage on the beach began to clear, not from any clean-up efforts, but from sinking into the soft ash. Trucks, tanks, tractors, 105s, jeeps, human remains, a thousand and one other things were lost forever deep within the sands of Iwo Jima.

I climbed out of my sleeping quarters on the wreck and began to make coffee. Its aroma acted like a magnet. Didich, Cummins, Minke and others joined me. Lieutenant Malcolm started over from about 75 yards away. The Japanese still resented our using one of their craft, wrecked or not. It seemed to be a particular sore spot with them. A light machine gun opened up. The rest of us were comparatively safe behind the ship's plating, but the strafing caught Malcolm out in the open. He plodded doggedly along in his big-footed, Colorado way, oblivious to the hot lead zinging all around him. I hollered and signalled him to get down. He simply strolled along, not flinching, in no particular hurry, not a care in the world. He climbed aboard ship, unruffled and unscathed. That Jap must have been the most myopic individual in the entire Imperial Army! As we drank our coffee, Lieutenant Malcolm mentioned he had another assignment and ordered me to report to a captain waiting on the far side of the airfield near a fork in the newly constructed road. I grabbed my Thompson and headed out.

I found the location and the captain with little incident and learned he was in charge of the grave registration detail. I informed him I was a scout and infiltrator, I knew nothing about grave registration. He acknowledged my lack of experience, but needed my help to retrieve Marine bodies from the back areas since no one else knew the terrain. Lieutenant Malcolm assured him he'd send up a perfect man for the job. I wasn't in the least bit happy, but it was useless to protest.

I found a tent pole with a metal spike attached to one end. A nearby tank crew put aside repairing their vehicle's track and bent the pole spike into a hook. Armed with my elongated gaff, I set out on the gruesome task. The Japanese booby-trapped everything in sight, including Marine bodies and their own dead. I pulled each corpse four or five feet with the long gaff to determine if they were safe for transport. I dragged the Marine bodies back to the road and laid them out of the way of passing traffic. I usually kicked the Japanese over a cliff or threw them into the nearest hole or ditch.

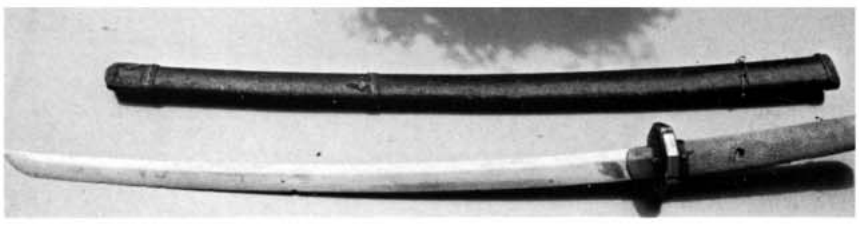
Some ten or twelve hours later, a new crew relieved me. Exhausted and again filthy, I returned to my unit. The next day, I asked Lieutenant Malcolm why he laid that grizzly assignment on me.

He casually replied, 'You were gettin' a little too smart-assed and careless. You needed some sittin' on.'

It appeared my object lesson was a little something Captain Stoll, Lieutenants Reece and Malcolm cooked up between themselves.

On another overcast day, Shuflata, Harbison, Rudd, Eagan and I were cleaning up bypassed caves around Minami, an area above our beach position. I spotted a suspicious looking hole. I followed a series of steps leading downward, they took a sharp right turn beneath the cliff. I entered the cave cautiously and waited for my eyes to adjust to the gloom. I moved in about twenty feet, carefully stepping over loose 'Yardstick' mines and other junk on the stone floor. A dead Jap lay off to my left at the entrance of a small connecting tunnel. I watched him closely, taking my time. Sure enough, I saw his foot quiver. I snapped off a pistol shot and nailed him right between the eyes. At the same time, a Samurai sword-swinging Jap jumped from the shadows. I ducked. His sword swung wide and struck the cave wall. I leaped at him, locked my left arm around his neck, buried my .45 into his breast and emptied the clip. He screamed something unintelligible in my ear.

As I backed away, Cummins threw me another pistol. I fired it into the other tunnel where I sensed more Japs were hiding. Shuflata threw me a white phosphorus grenade. I pulled the pin and tossed it in. The Japs threw it back out and it rolled between my feet. I bolted up the steps just as it blew, the chemicals singing the back of my jacket. I ran back yelling for more grenades. Eagan tossed me one, but in his excitement, pulled the pin first. I relayed it into the cave just in time. Smoke from the phosphorus drew immediate mortar fire. That ended our patrol for the day.



The sword used against Don Marshall and taken as a trophy— note the nicks in the blade.

During a scramble near a concrete bunker, I somehow lost my pistol just before we threw a satchel charge into the hole. The terrific concussion forced a staggering Jap officer out of the blasted, smoky opening. One of our men shot him. I grabbed his pistol and holster to replace mine, then headed back with Hal Lewis, a tractor man from Wisconsin.

'. . . we threw a satchel charge into the hole. The terrific concussion forced a staggering Jap officer out of the blasted, smoking opening. One of our men shot him . . . I grabbed his pistol . . . ' In the case of the scene illustrated in the picture *above*, the mopping-up was being carried out by (on the left) Pfc Norman J. Bauknecht of Antigo, Wisconsin, and Pfc Joe Koresch of Chicago. (By a strange coincidence, Antigo is also the present home town of John Bradley, the last surviving member of the Suribachi flag-raising party who now runs a funeral home there and is incredibly 'low-key' about his fame.) Another picture by Private Bob Campbell. (NA)

Sulphur fumes and volcanic heat has mummified most remains but acidic gases in some caves have left very little to recover. These pictures were taken during Charles Peffer's tour of duty in 1984, the year when Reverend Wachi opened the so-called 'Hospital Cave' in the north-west corner of the island which was found to contain the remains of 53 Japanese servicemen.

Left: **'Infiltrators were continually popping up out of nowhere,' says Marshall. 'These two had bags of grenades when discovered. They had already wounded me but did not follow through to kill me off or another Marine, Corporal Hal Lewis. I charged, firing at both with an untried Japanese pistol. It was fairly accurate but had no hitting power. Lewis, firing from an angle, contained Japs within landing craft engine room until I was close enough to pump four slugs into one, three into the other. Wounded but still active, they both blew themselves up.'** *Right:* **The same 8mm Nambu pistol retained by Don Marshall.**

As we approached the East Boat Basin from the north, we came upon a wrecked Japanese landing barge not too far from where I set the wrecked ship on fire. The barge was a perfect hiding place for snipers. I walked up to it and peered in. Wouldn't you know it, I spotted two of them inside. I think I felt as startled as they. I backed up about ten yards and warned Lewis. He took cover to the left at about the same distance.

A sniper peered out. I called to him, 'Daitakoi! Daitakoi! Nua yu karo utsooso!' meaning 'Come Out! Come out! I won't shoot!'

He peeked around the gangway edge, smiled and said, 'Hi, hi.' meaning Yes, yes.

To demonstrate my sincerity and sense of fair play, I carefully lowered my Japanese pistol to the ground. He stepped forward, hands over his head, all the while nodding and smiling, 'Hi, Hi, Hi, Hi.'

I spotted a grenade cupped in his palm. I grabbed my pistol and snapped off a shot. At the same, he popped the cap against the gangway overhead and threw the grenade. My shot hit his forearm, the grenade fell short. It exploded, hurling me backwards through the air. I landed with a thump. As I shook my head to clear the cobwebs, Lewis fired.

I took inventory of my body parts, my left hand was a mass of blood, its ring finger missing above the knuckle. With a roar, I jumped up and charged, blazing away at both Japs who now stood in full view. Two more explosions went off in front of me, both had deliberately blown themselves up. I felt angry and disgusted with them. They had me cold and a better than even chance of finishing off Lewis. Instead, they abandoned all. I felt they cheated not only me, but their own General and all he stood for.

On closer inspection of my finger stump, I saw a piece of shrapnel embedded in the knuckle. Turning my hand over, I discovered my missing finger tightly crooked and safely intact. I found another piece of shrapnel in my face and a sizable piece in my shin. I pulled it out and bandaged the wound. The shrapnel in my knuckle would have to wait until I found someone with a pair of pliers.

I didn't know it at the time, but these would be my last two kills. I was sent up to Turkey Knob where the fighting was intense. Someone said he saw a bird yesterday, I didn't believe him . . .

I crawled to the top of a small knoll and sat down with my back exposed to the enemy's shell fire. I was too tired to care. An officer wearing a clean uniform raced up and began swearing at me. Some of his gist registered, 'a Goddamned slacker . . . If you want some action, I'll put you in the front lines!'

Sergeant Milks, an old Corps Marine, came forward and apologised to the officer. He pulled me down behind a rock and handed me his whisky-filled canteen. Together we worked our way back to our command post on Blue Beach 2. Only 19 of our 136 tractors were operable, none of us knew the casualty count.

A few days later, our unit boarded the *President Polk* and sailed for Hawaii. Orders came down to clean ourselves up and look presentable while aboard ship. It simply wasn't possible. My jaw was distorted by metal clamps covering a four-inch gash, the seat of my pants was ripped out, one of my boots stunk from stepping through a rotting Jap's belly. All the other men were in similar condition. Our sentiments toward the captain of the transport ship USS *President Polk* were one and the same . . . he could stick it in his ear!

I've never forgotten the day I was on burial duty and saw the sign carved in the soft volcanic rock by some unknown Marine:

HERE LIE THREE DEAD JAPS
HEAR NO IWO
SEE NO IWO
SPEAK NO IWO
BY JIMA!

Left: **Don Marshall with the Bergseid twins, John and Engel, at the Marine Corps reunion held in Memphis, Tennessee in 1986. All three were drivers with the 5th Amph Trac Battalion, 4th Marine Division. Engel's tractor was mortared shortly after Marshall's was destroyed. Four men were killed. Engel was wounded and unconscious, his helmet and dog-tags torn off and left at the scene. Another wounded Marine, Ed 'Skip' Stalling, dragged Engel through the bodies eventually to safety. Marshall and Engel were both listed as missing and presumed dead. Marshall was found almost a week later fighting at the front. Engel was discovered aboard a hospital ship by his brother John who never gave up hope.** *Right:* **J. W. 'Spike' Malcolm was the lieutenant in charge of Marshall's unit. Malcolm and others recommended Marshall for the Silver Star, but the award was refused because Marshall, while fighting at the front, was technically AWOL from his own unit. After almost 50 years the two met at the Memphis reunion.**

Iwo Jima Today

By Lieutenant Markus D. Dausses
Commanding Officer,
USCG LORAN Station, Iwo Jima

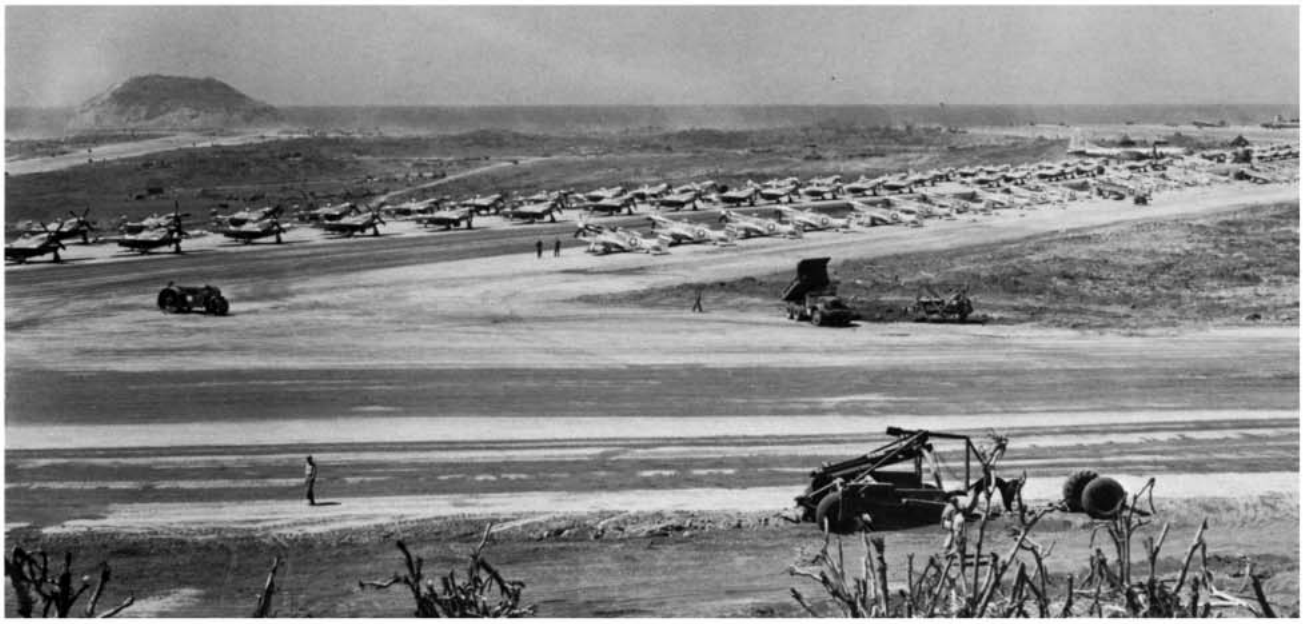
Above: **The official flag-raising on Iwo Jima took place outside V Corps headquarters at 9.30 a.m. on March 14 — two days before the island was declared secured. At the same time, the flag which had flown over Mount Suribachi since D plus 4 was taken down. (NA)** *Below:* **Within weeks, Iwo was swarming with American troops as tented camps and quonset huts mushroomed across the formerly barren landscape. This is the view north from Mount Suribachi towards Airfield No. 1 (Chidori) — the first of the three airfields (see plan page 5) to be made operational. (NA)**

Initially, there was an urgent need for a short strip for observation aircraft and the 2nd Separate Engineer Battalion (Marine) met this requirement before the 62nd Seabees moved in to share the major reconstruction with the Marines. While men of the 2nd Bomb Disposal Company (Marine) checked the ground for mines and unexploded shells and bombs, heavy plant was moved in *(above left)* **to begin the regrading. The two short runways, running N–S and NW–SE, were completed by March 4, and by March 12 the long 5,800-foot NE–SW runway was operational** *(above right)*. **(NASM)**

In 1993, the island of Iwo Jima could not be more different from what it was in the terrible months of February, March and April 1945. There is one similarity: it is still an island base used only by the military, the only available flights to the island being on military aircraft. But this is where the similarities end. Today, Iwo Jima is green and lush, and a modern runway and barracks facility have replaced the devastated landscape of 1945. Even the shape of the island itself has changed with the western shore of Iwo curving into a giant peninsula, where once there was ocean and the small land mass known as Kama Rock. However, the most fundamental change is with the people themselves. Today, Japanese and Americans work side by side as allies and, most importantly, as friends. Most weekends provide great examples of how different things are in 1993. The Coast Guard softball team regularly plays the Japanese Navy and Air Force teams, followed by a barbecue at a picnic area overlooking Iwo Jima's golf course. The stark contrast is especially notable since these events take place in areas known for some of the heaviest fighting during the battle.

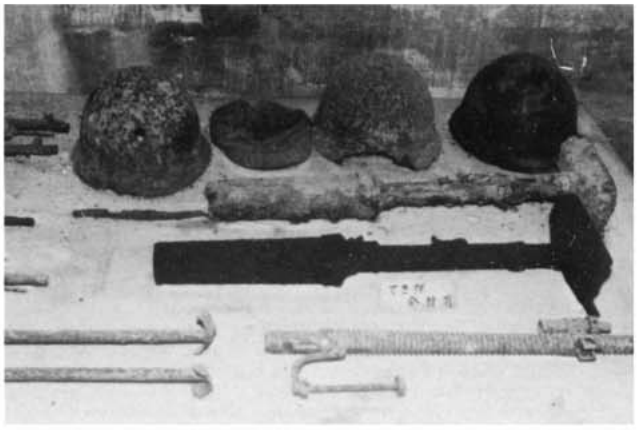
Chidori had been the largest airfield built on Iwo by the Japanese and it may be recalled that the prime reason for capturing the island was to secure an airbase en route to Tokyo. Apart from 'grasshoppers', the first aircraft to land was a Navy C-47 hospital plane *Peg O' My Heart* on Saturday, March 3 even though only 3,000 feet of the main runway had been completed. An R5C Curtiss Commando carrying urgently required mortar ammunition followed. Then on Sunday, a B-29 Superfortress *Dinah Might,* returning to Saipan after a raid on an aircraft factory south-west of Tokyo, made an emergency landing low on fuel. (NASM)

She was the first of a total of 2,251 Superfortresses to land on the island by the war's end, of which a large number would have been lost if Iwo had not been available as an emergency staging post on the 1,400-mile run from the B-29 bases on Saipan and Guam. Against the lives of the 6,821 Marines, soldiers and sailors who were killed in the capture of the island, can be set those of nearly 25,000 American air force crewmen who were saved. And fighter escort from Iwo-based P-51s undoubtedly helped to protect more of the bombers over Japan. The Mustangs of VII Fighter Command began their escort duties on April 7 — this picture shows the busy scene on Airfield No. 1 the following day. (NASM)



Next came Airfield No. 2 — Motoyama — which had been built with the help of Korean forced labour in March 1944. Being in full view of Hill 382 (Radar Hill) to the north and Turkey Knob to the east, work could not begin until both these positions had been taken. The American airfield was constructed over the original runway by the 133rd Naval Seabees while fighting was still going on in the north of the island. Airfield No. 1 can be seen in the distance. (NASM)

After the war, Motoyama was used predominantly and Chidori fell into disuse. As a major US base in the Pacific, the airfield was modernised and enlarged, but was handed over to the Japanese in 1968. The old radar station was levelled when the runway was extended (the Americans installed their radar on Suribachi) but a large pillbox still stands overlooking the airfield on Turkey Knob. Inside, a small museum has been set up to display relics *(below)* recovered from the battlefield.



The remains of the single E–W runway of the old Airfield No. 3, which was still under construction when captured, now lies in the shadow of the LORAN mast erected in 1964 to replace an earlier 1,350-foot tower which collapsed in March that year — an accident which resulted in several deaths. LORAN (Long Range Aid to Navigation) is a system of radio navigation using shore-based transmitters and shipboard receivers to allow mariners to accurately determine their position at sea. It works in all weathers and has an accuracy of one quarter of a nautical mile up to 1,000 miles from the transmitter. The LORAN station itself is located at Kitano Point.

For 20 years after the war, there was a US Air Force base on the island which provided support to units throughout the Pacific, but in 1968 Iwo Jima was returned to Japan. Since that time, the only permanent United States presence has been the 30-man Coast Guard crew of the LORAN station. In September 1993 the facility was turned over to the Japanese Maritime Safety Agency (the Japanese Coast Guard), so for the first time since 1945 there are now no Americans stationed on the island. Nevertheless, US military flights will continue to transit the island while flying from Asia and the South Pacific. Much like it was valued in 1945 as a pivotal stepping stone from the Mariana Islands to the Japanese mainland, Iwo Jima will also continue to be an important Japanese airbase in the region.

In September 1945, the US Navy sank eight concrete and four American, Russian and Japanese blockships in the shape of a square off the western beach to provide a sheltered anchorage for small craft. However, due to the action of storms and tides (Typhoon Louise in September 1955 destroyed 98 per cent of the installations on Iwo Jima), these blockships caused a peninsula (seen in the background of this picture) to form joining the small islet of Kama Iwa to the main island, thus altering the shape of Iwo Jima compared with 1945. (See also page 17.) Thus these shipwrecks, although often portrayed as such, are not really relics of the battle. Today, large vessels have to anchor offshore and ferry supplies ashore.

This sculpture of the Iwo Jima flag-raising was carved in a sandstone rock by Waldon T. Rich, a member of the 31st Naval Construction Battalion, in July 1945. It has survived the intervening period and can be seen beside the road in the north-west of the island, not far from the so-called Hospital Cave opened up in 1984 by Reverend Wachi.

Later in 1945, the Seabees erected the Marine Corps monument on Mount Suribachi which was dedicated by the then-Commanding General of Iwo Jima, Brigadier General F. M. Hopkins. However, behind the monument which commemorates the first flag-raising, is a small red 'X' which marks the spot where the 'Joe Rosenthal' flagpole was erected.

Cemeteries were laid out for the American dead of the three Marine divisions which had participated in the battle. *Above left:* That of the 3rd and 4th Marines, which contained the remains of 3,160 US Marine, Seabee, Army and Navy servicemen, as well as a section for war dogs killed in action, was located east of Chidori airfield. (NASM) *Above right:* Further to the south, in the area where on the second day of the battle the 5th Division cut across the neck of the island, lay the remains of their dead — 2,280 Marine, Seabee, Army and Navy casualties — in a cemetery laid out in the form of a cross. (NASM) *Below:* All the remains of the American dead were removed from the island prior to the return of Iwo Jima to the Japanese in 1968. Today, the cemetery locations have become overgrown with scrub, the disused Chidori runway now being used as an access road to the quarry operated by the Kajima Construction Company. *Right:* This plaque was put up on the fortieth anniversary of the battle — February 19, 1985 — to replace an earlier missing marker originally erected by the 4th Marine Division Association to the memory of those of their comrades once buried on this spot.

The entire defense of the island was centered on the hundreds of caves which were scattered throughout Iwo Jima, many of which became tombs for the Japanese soldiers trapped in the tunnels. To this day, the Government of Japan continues to look for the remains of those who fell in defending the island. The 'bone-diggers', as they are called, come out about twice a year for one or two weeks with about 30 to 50 people and use huge earth-movers to try to uncover caves, with the help of those who were stationed here during the war, and were taken prisoner. The island has a great deal of volcanic activity and many of the caves have steam vents that keep the temperatures terribly high. Since the island has changed so much, there are often great difficulties in locating the caves today, and the Japanese encourage the Americans to help, which is a special gesture since many of the bone-diggers are Iwo Jima veterans. There are still about nine thousand Japanese remains unaccounted for from the war. The remains found during the cave excavations are cremated in a short ceremony, followed by a solemn observance held at the Tenzan Memorial near the runway. The ashes are then returned to Tokyo, since Iwo Jima is a part of Tokyo Prefecture (county).

The bodies of the Japanese dead — over 22,000 all told — were either unceremoniously interred in unmarked graves or sealed up within caves which became their tombs. After the war, Reverend Wachi made over 150 trips to the island to search for the remains which were then cremated according to Buddhist beliefs so that the spirits of the dead could finally be at peace, the ceremony being held at the Tenzan Memorial (Heavenly Mountain) located near Hill 362C just to the north of the eastern end of the main runway at the JSDF airfield.

Above: **There are many different memorials on Iwo, but that to the war dead of both nations is located on Requiem Hill — over Awatzu cave just south of the airfield where natural irrigation from a pool at the southern end waters plants at the northern end. Looking south** *(below)* **Suribachi can be seen framed in the distance. The monument was the venue of the reception held at the 40th Anniversary Reunion of Honor attended by 278 Americans and 134 Japanese — a ceremony of reconciliation for which Reverend Wachi obtained approval from the Japanese authorities.**

Iwo Jima, with its long and terrible history, has come to mean many things to many people. Most people remember Iwo Jima for the bloody combat that occurred here, and despite the fact that it is still used by the military today, the island itself is one of the largest peace memorials in the world, with the signs everywhere wishing in English and Japanese: 'May peace prevail on earth'.

Today, Iwo Jima's greatest value is as an example of how things and people can change. An island which was burnt and gutted became green, but still bears the scars of the past so that people don't forget. People who once hated and distrusted each other have put aside differences, and now work and play in the spirit of friendship.

I will remember Iwo Jima for many good things, the most important being my wedding, the first since the civilian population left Iwo in 1944. The ceremony was held at Chinkon-no Oka (Requiem Hill) Memorial, a beautiful monument built on top of one of the largest and most complex series of tunnels.

On March 19, 1993, the memorial was also the venue for another unique event — the marriage of Lieutenant Dausses, the US Coast Guard commander, and Deborah — the first wedding ceremony concluded on Iwo Jima since the battle.

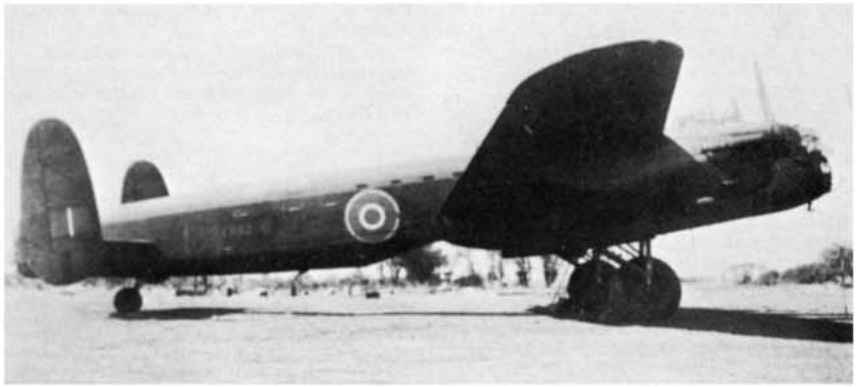
REFLYING THE DAMS RAID

By Mike McCormac

Early one morning in May 1993, I took off from Southend Airport in a Piper Cherokee. Destination, the great dams of the Ruhr. At the time when the papers were filled with material covering the 50th anniversary of the famous 'Dambusters' Raid', I had to go and see for myself.

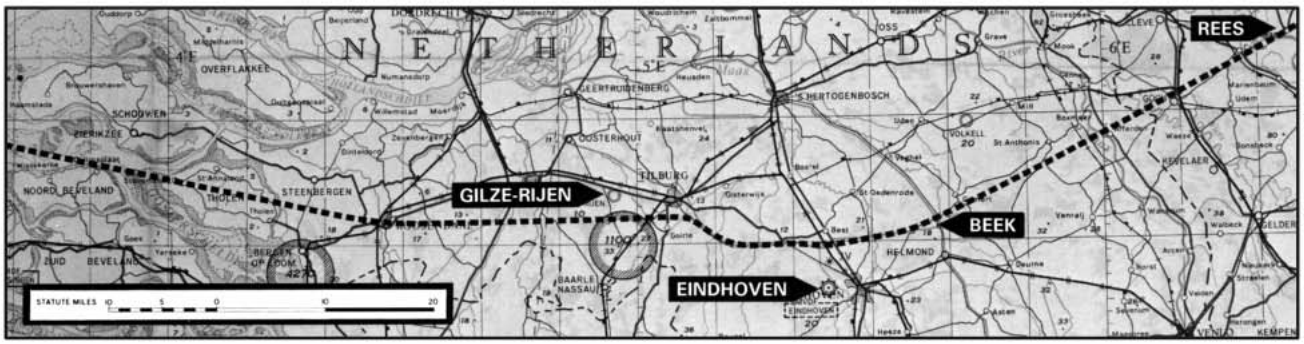
The Dams Raid is considered to be one of the greatest operations in the history of the RAF. The basic facts are well known. On the night of May 16/17, 1943, nineteen Lancaster aircraft of No. 617 Squadron left RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire to attack a number of strategic dams in Germany on Operation 'Chastise'. The resulting success of the raid in breaching two major dams gave rise to a legend. 'Chastise' has been described as one of the most brilliant attacks of the war, though a number of post-war analyses have shed doubt on both its execution and its effectiveness. As I climbed away from Southend into the morning sunshine, I was setting out to try to understand what had actually been achieved and how it had been done.

The flight was an entry to an international flying competition called 'Dawn to Dusk'. An annual event, the principle of the competition is to choose a theme of your choice, and then fly a route in connection with the theme, subsequently writing a report on the flight for judging. The flight has to take all day, hence 'Dawn to Dusk'.



Top: **The author with G-BBID at Southend Airport before setting out to refly the Dams Raid. The Cherokee is a single-engined, four-seater aircraft with a range of 500 miles and a cruising speed of around 100 mph.** *Above:* **This compares with the Lancaster's four engines, seven crew, 1,500 plus miles range, and cruising speed of 170 mph.**

At the controls — then and now. Mike McCormac about to set out on the historic 750-mile round trip to the Ruhr dams.



Mike picked up the route at the point where 617 Squadron crossed the Dutch coast.

Before setting out I read all the published material I could find relating to the raid, and then paid a number of visits to the Public Record Office in Kew to look at the original files. These showed that the objectives of 'Chastise' were split between economic objectives and moral objectives. The economic objectives of the raid were to try to interrupt the Ruhr industries by causing a water shortage, a power shortage, by damaging the transport infrastructure and by flooding factories. The moral objectives were to try to break the will of the German workers in the Ruhr. On top of these written objectives, there are indications that the British were also trying to maintain the support of their US and Russian allies, and a successful, visible operation along the lines of 'Chastise' would undoubtedly help. Finally, on the home front, at a time when the war appeared to be going Germany's way, a successful raid would do much to boost morale at home.

The competition entry was flown in a four-seater, single-engined Piper Cherokee aircraft. My original plan was to ask the RAF for permission to start from Scampton, the base from which 617 Squadron flew the raid. However, I decided against this because following their route over the sea would have meant a 90-mile crossing from Southwold to the Schelde estuary. When you only have one engine you tend to avoid such long sea crossings! Southend was an ideal alternative start point; from there I flew south east to Dover, across the Channel, and then up the French, Belgian and Dutch coasts to the Schelde estuary to pick up the interesting part of the bombers' route into Germany.

The Lancasters flew from Scampton in three waves; the first and the third crossed the Dutch coast at the Schelde estuary; the second wave took a more northerly route over the Zuider Zee. They chose the Schelde estuary because they would be able to slip between the coastal defences on the islands of Walcheren and Schouwen. They flew at a very low level; the Operation Order for 'Chastise' instructed them to cross the coast 'at the lowest possible level'. The vast majority of the route was flown at less than 100 feet above ground to avoid the threats posed by night fighters and most anti-aircraft fire.

Passing over the Dutch island of Noord Beveland (in the foreground), with the estuary of the River Schelde and the island of Schouwen beyond. On the night of May 16/17, 1943, the first and third waves of 617 Squadron's Lancasters crossed the Dutch coast between the islands on their way to the dams. They chose to fly up the estuary to avoid the anti-aircraft defences on the islands. After the war, the two islands were joined by the Oosterscheldedam.

As I reached the Schelde and turned east to follow their route to Germany, I descended to 1,500 feet to get a good view of the ground. In the bright sunshine, navigating by following the map was straightforward. For the Lancaster pilots, flying by moonlight at a much lower level at almost twice my speed in a much larger and more cumbersome aircraft, life must have been much more difficult.

The route initially went slightly south of east to the railway junction in Roosendaal, then almost due east to pick up the line of the Wilhelmina Canal east of Tilburg. The canal was a tremendous landmark for me to follow; for them it was a life-saver. They had to pass between the Luftwaffe bases at Gilze-Rijen to the north-west and Eindhoven to the south-east, aiming for and following the canal kept them almost exactly half way between the two. Lancaster AJ-S, commanded by Pilot Officer Lewis Burpee, was shot down immediately south of Gilze-Rijen at 0200 on his way to the Sorpe Dam.

Left: **The 'Dambusters' flew slightly south of east from the estuary to Roosendaal, instantly recognisable by the complex railway junction north of the town.** *Right:* **After Roosendaal, the flight path continued east to take it between the Luftwaffe airfields at Gilze-Rijen and Eindhoven. East of Tilburg, the route was paralleled by the Wilhelmina Canal which formed a distinctive landmark. The canal would probably have been equally distinctive in the moonlight for the Lancasters.**

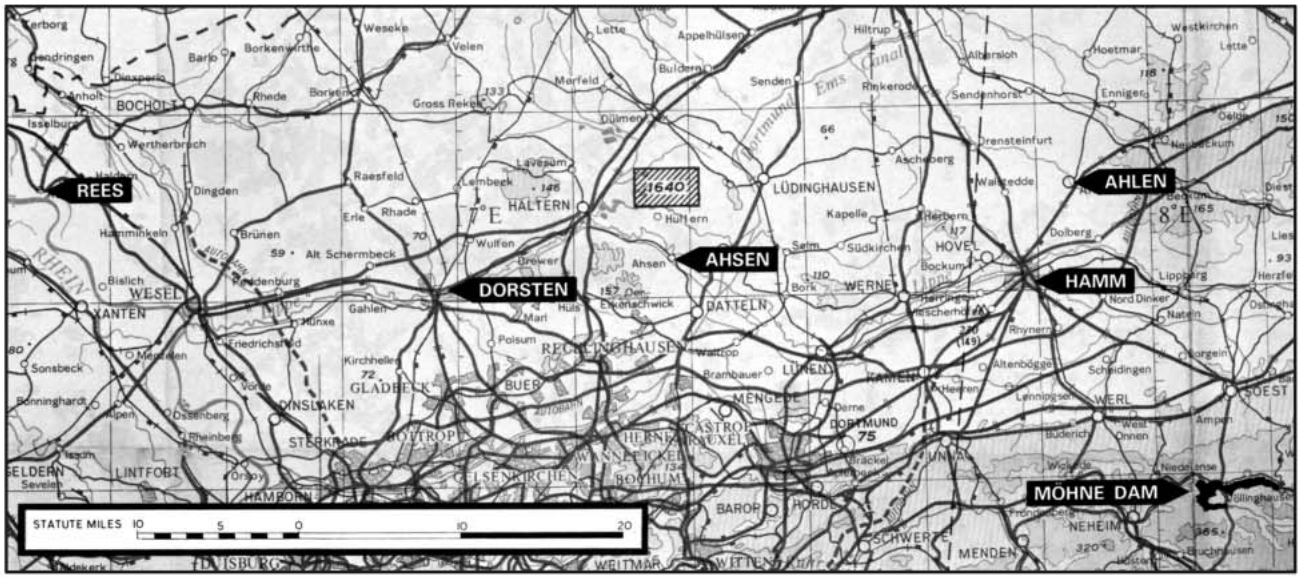
The next turning point was the village of Beek, easily identifiable to the Lancasters because of the distinctive T-junction where the Wilhelmina Canal (on the left) joins the Zuid Willemsvaart. The fourth curving arm of the junction on the right is a post-war addition.

Following the canal led to the next turning point, a very distinctive T-junction in the canal south-east of Beek. Today a fourth arm has been added to the junction which makes it even more distinctive from the air. After Beek, the route turned slightly north of east to keep the Lancasters clear of the Luftwaffe bases of De Peel and Laarbruch, passing over the River Maas to cross the border into Germany. The next turning point was south-east of the town of Rees on the Rhine. This was a very distinctive turning point, the town being situated between two large bends in the river. The moonlight shining on the river would probably have helped the Lancasters find this landmark quite easily.

Two of the Lancasters were lost in the area of Rees. On the outward journey, Lancaster AJ-E, commanded by Flight Lieutenant Robert Barlow, was hit by anti-aircraft fire, and then flew into wires. The aircraft crashed killing all seven on board, but the aircraft's 'Upkeep' (the famous revolving mine used for the raid) was not destroyed in the crash. Despite the elaborate British security which surrounded 'Upkeep' for many years after the war, as a result of recovering the device from the wreck, the Germans knew almost everything about it as early as May 1943. The other Lancaster to be lost near Rees was AJ-Z, commanded by Squadron Leader Henry Maudsley, who was shot down while returning to Scampton after attacking the Eder Dam.

After Rees, there is a degree of confusion as to the exact route followed by 617 Squadron. The Operation Order gives the next turning point as the village of Ahsen, which would have kept the Lancasters to the north of the defended Ruhr towns. Many reports state that at the last moment this was changed to some lakes a little to the north of Ahsen. What is known is that after Rees the early Lancasters ran into severe anti-aircraft fire, to the extent that they sent a radio message back to have the route adjusted slightly southwards again. A clue as to the actual route they used can be derived from the fact that Lancaster AJ-B, commanded by Flight Lieutenant Bill Astell, was shot down by anti-aircraft fire north of the town of Dorsten while on his way to the Möhne Dam. Assuming he was pretty much on track, that would have meant they had reverted to using a route close to the original plan by the time he got there.

Crossing the Rhine at Rees. From Beek the route turned north-east into Germany to cross the Rhine at the town of Rees. This position was probably chosen because the town is midway between two distinctive bends in the river. It was on the far bank of the river, to the right of the town, that Flight Lieutenant Barlow's Lancaster crashed after being hit by anti-aircraft fire and then colliding with wires on his way to the Sorpe Dam.



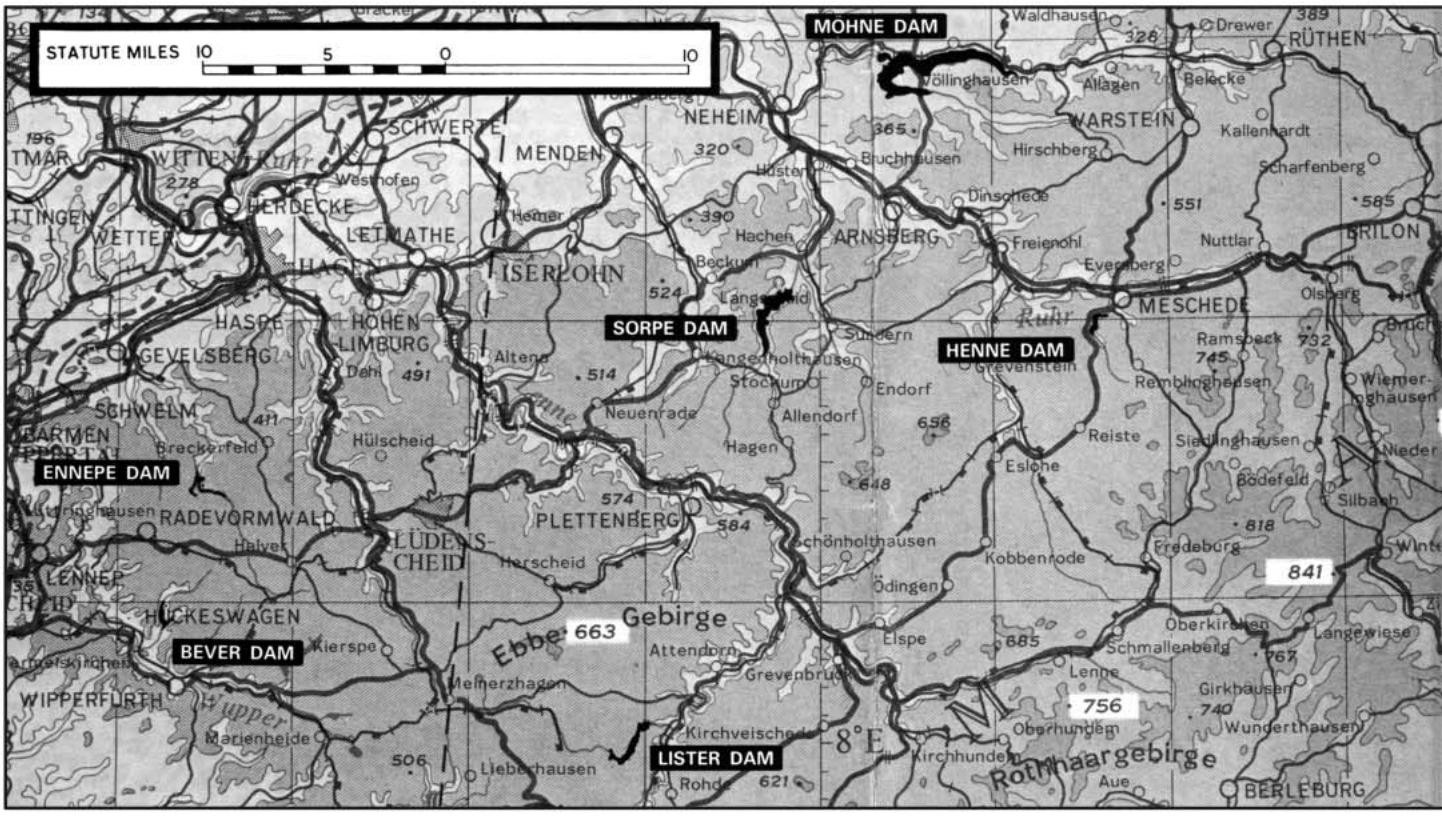
Ahsen. Being just a small village, Ahsen was the most difficult of the turning points to determine. Mike McCormac: 'At the planning stages, I went to a lot of trouble to have landmarks to look for in my mind. The line of the canal was an obvious one, the village being confirmed by its shape and the two bridges over the canal.'

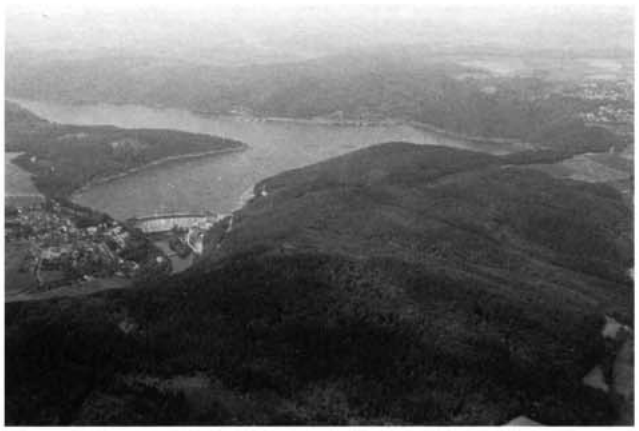
Ahlen. The route passed round the edges of Ahlen, the railway line east-north-east of the town marking the point where 617 Squadron turned south-south-east for the Möhne Dam. The town is probably bigger today than it was in 1943. After Ahlen, Mike's route left that of the squadron to head more south-easterly to Paderborn for his first refuelling stop.

After Ahsen, the route turned slightly north of east to pass round the town of Ahlen, the actual turning point being marked by crossing the railway on the edge of the town. Another Lancaster was lost on the leg from Ahsen to Ahlen when AJ-C, commanded by Pilot Officer Warner Ottley, was shot down just north of the town of Hamm on his way to the Lister Dam. From Ahsen, the Lancasters flew directly to the dams. I left their route at Ahsen to land at Paderborn to refuel after over three hours flying since leaving Southend.

Taking off from Paderborn I wanted to get round the eight dams connected with 'Chastise' as expeditiously as possible. My first objective was the Diemel Dam, a masonry dam which stands at the northern head of two narrow valleys. The Operation Order for

The Diemel Dam and the village of Helminghausen photographed from the north. The dam would probably have been attacked by flying almost north-easterly up the shorter arm of the dam (almost directly towards the camera), passing over the dam, and then breaking off to the west (right) where the ground is lower and the climbout easier after releasing the 'Upkeep' 'bouncing bomb'.





Left: **The Eder Dam, looking from the south-east, with the village of Edersee to the left of the dam, the village of Waldeck on the right of the picture and Waldeck Castle barely discernible to the left of Waldeck village, above the right-hand arm of the reservoir. The Eder Dam was attacked from the north-east of the reservoir by diving south-westwards (from right to left) over Waldeck Castle towards the spit of land projecting into the reservoir, then turning sharp left (towards the camera) to attack the dam heading south-eastwards. After dropping the 'Upkeep', the aircraft would have turned right on the picture to climb steeply to get over the hill in the right foreground. This manoeuvre proved very difficult, so much so that each of the attacking aircraft had to make a number of runs before actually releasing their mines.** *Right:* **The Eder after the attack.**

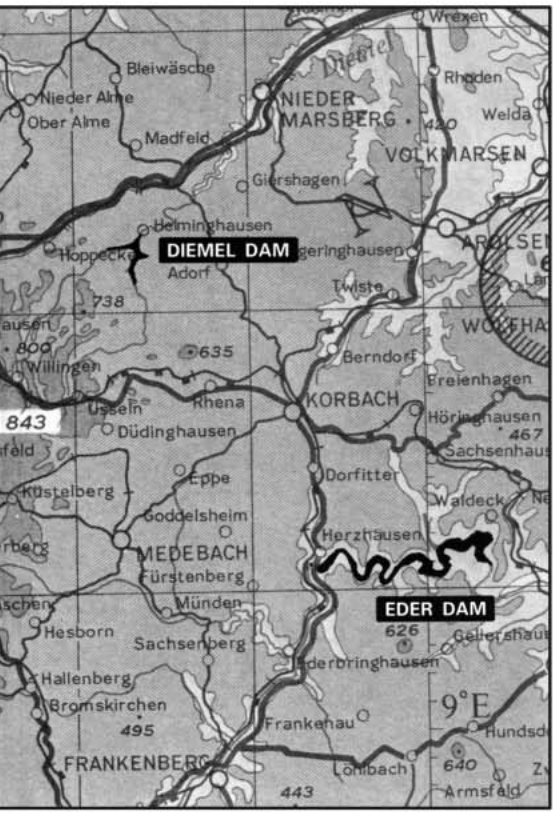
'Chastise' defined the Diemel Dam as a secondary target only to be attacked following the successful breaching of the Möhne, Sorpe and Eder Dams. Research prior to the attack indicated that the Diemel Dam was surmounted by two towers, whilst in fact there were none. This fact alone would have made any attack on the Diemel Dam almost certain to fail because the bomb-aimer would have had no idea of his distance from the dam, and so would not have known when to release the 'Upkeep'. In the event, only one aircraft was ordered to attack the Diemel. This was Lancaster AJ-Y, commanded by Flight Sergeant Cyril Anderson. The aircraft never reached the target, being diverted whilst in flight to attack the Sorpe. However, by then the aircraft was uncertain of its position and had suffered damage, and so turned back.

From the Diemel, I headed south-east to the famous Eder Dam. Situated between steep valleys and tree-covered hillsides, the dam stands at the south-eastern corner of a massive reservoir known as the Edersee. It is a curved masonry dam very similar in construction to the Möhne, capable of holding back a maximum of 202,000,000 cubic metres of water. At the time of the attack, the Eder Dam was the largest dam in Germany.

The dam was attacked from the north-east of the reservoir by diving south-westwards over Waldeck Castle towards a spit of land, then turning sharp left to attack the dam heading south-eastwards. This manoeuvre proved very difficult, such that each of the attacking aircraft had to make a number of runs before actually releasing their mines. The Eder Dam was attacked by three Lancasters: AJ-L, commanded by Flight Lieutenant Dave Shannon; AJ-Z, commanded by Squadron Leader Henry Maudsley; and AJ-N, commanded by Pilot Officer Les Knight. The dam was breached by the third Lancaster using the last of the 'Upkeep' devices.

As I circled round looking for the best picture, I had to marvel at the skill of men who could fly large, fast, four-engined bombers down into that tight valley and up out again at night with the accuracy they did. The scars of their success remain today. When the dam was rebuilt after it was breached by 617 Squadron, some overflow sluices were not replaced. This gives the dam an odd appearance; the sluices are there on the right, but not on the left.

Leaving the Eder, I headed north-west towards the Henne Dam. The Henne was included in the original plans for 'Chastise', but then dropped in the final planning because it was too close to the defended town of Meschede. I thought I had missed the dam until, as I flew over a high ridge, there it was beneath me. The dam stands at the north-eastern end of a long thin reservoir known as the Hennesee. Today's Henne Dam is an earth dam which has been built after the war to replace the masonry dam which stood in 1943.



The Henne Dam from the south, with the town of Meschede in the background. Today's Henne Dam has been rebuilt since the war as an earth dam, the original having been a gravity-type dam with a masonry wall. Whilst being one of the original targets for Operation 'Chastise', the Henne Dam was dropped from the plans at a late stage because of its inaccessible position and its proximity to the defended town of Meschede. 'The Henne proved difficult for me as well', says Mike. 'It was hard to find because of its location in a deep valley, and on top of that there was a very active glider field at the other end of the reservoir.' Had the dam been attacked, it is considered that it would have been from left to right across the head of the reservoir.

The Möhne Dam from the north-east, with the village of Körbecke to the right, the town of Günne just beyond the dam to its right, and the town of Niederense just discernible slightly above and to the left of the dam. The dam was attacked by flying down the arm of the reservoir in the foreground away from camera, over the spit of land projecting from the left, turning slightly right onto a heading to attack the dam at right-angles to its length. After releasing the 'Upkeep' and crossing the dam, the aircraft turned sharp left to avoid having to fly over Günne. In comparison with some of the other dams it was proposed to attack, the Möhne was a comparatively easy target. The ground around the dam is not so high, and there was a good run up to the dam to establish on the right line at the right height at the right speed. Against this, the dam was heavily defended. Flight Lieutenant Hopgood's Lancaster was shot down and crashed in in the woods just beyond and to the right of the dam.

After the Henne, the next dam to visit was the famous Möhne. No problems with finding this one: being situated in less undulating country, I could see it from miles away. The dam stands at the north-western corner of the Möhnesee, a vast reservoir almost 10 km long on the longer of its two arms. The Möhne Dam was opened personally by the Kaiser in 1913 after taking four years to build. It is a curved masonry dam built of limestone which contains a maximum of 134,000,000 cubic metres of water.

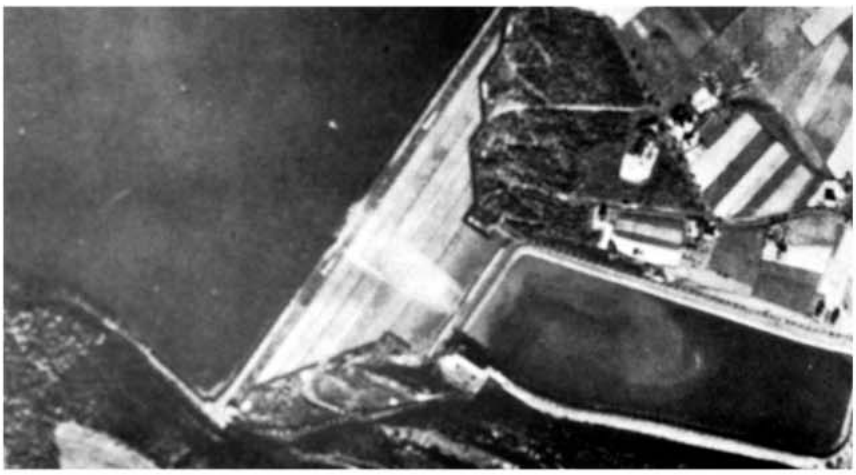
The Operation Order identified the Möhne Dam as the primary target for 'Chastise'. The dam was attacked from the east, heading west-south-west along the northern arm of the reservoir, before crossing a spit of land to turn onto a north-westerly heading for the final attack. The Möhne Dam was attacked by five Lancasters, AJ-G commanded by Wing Commander Guy Gibson, AJ-M commanded by Flight Lieutenant John 'Hoppy' Hopgood, AJ-P commanded by Flight Lieutenant Harold 'Micky' Martin, AJ-A commanded by Squadron Leader Henry 'Dinghy' Young and AJ-J commanded by Flight Lieutenant David Maltby. The Möhne was the only dam attacked that was defended. It was those defences which hit Hopgood's Lancaster AJ-M resulting in it exploding and crashing after releasing its 'Upkeep'. Amazingly, two of the crew survived the explosion.

Opinions vary over which Lancaster's 'Upkeep' actually breached the Möhne; Young's mine certainly significantly weakened the dam if it did not actually break it, Maltby's 'Upkeep' left a wide hole in the dam through which the water poured. Young and his crew did not return, Lancaster AJ-A being shot down on the return flight north of IJmuiden at 0258 killing all the seven crew.

As I approached the Möhne from the south-east, the lake was covered in pleasure boats and looked so tranquil that it was hard to imagine what it must have been like that night fifty years ago. Circling round the dam to take pictures, I tried to imagine how the pilots must have felt looking down on this huge dam; how they must have felt when Lancaster AJ-M was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed on the hill north-west of the dam; how they must have felt when the structure was breached and the wall of water rushed down the valley towards Günne and Niederense.

Left: **The Möhne Dam from the north-west. At the time of the attack there was a power station below the dam. The Möhne was attacked by five Lancasters, the fourth significantly weakening if not actually breaching the dam, the fifth 'Upkeep' finally breaking the dam wall to allow almost all of the 134 million tonnes of water behind it to escape.** *Right:* **Guy Gibson autographs the breach. It is now believed that his mine exploded before reaching the dam.**

Right: **The Sorpe Dam from the north-west, with the village of Langscheid to the right of the dam. Being of earthen construction rather than a masonry dam, the Sorpe was attacked by flying along its length rather than at right-angles to the dam wall. The 'Upkeep' mines were not spun for the attack, simply dropped in the manner of a conventional bomb as near as possible to the centre of the dam from the lowest possible level. The church in Langscheid can just be discerned on the higher ground in the nearest part of the village. It was this church that the crews used as a guide to ensure that their line was correct as they flew from right to left across the line of the dam, turning further left after passing over it. As the mist thickened in the valley, so it became more and more difficult to get the right line, the high ground on the further side of the valley demanding accurate flying and making each attempt particularly hazardous. The Sorpe was attacked by two Lancasters, both aircraft making a number of runs before releasing their mines. Despite both weapons dropped on the Sorpe exploding near the centre of the dam, it resulted in no significant damage being caused** *(centre).*



After the Möhne, I turned south-west to the Sorpe Dam which stands amidst tree-covered hills at the north-eastern end of the Sorpesee reservoir. It was built between 1927 and 1933 and differs from the other dams attacked in that it is an earth dam with two earth banks built on either side of a 10-metre-thick concrete core — a factor which made it less suitable than a masonry dam for a 'Chastise'-style attack. The Operation Order considered the Sorpe to be next in importance after the Möhne. It was attacked differently to the other dams because it was an earth dam. Rather than approaching at right-angles to the dam, the Sorpe was attacked by flying along its length, releasing the mine (which was not rotating) to fall in the water next to its centre point. This entailed flying a south-easterly heading, descending steeply over the church spire in the village of Langscheid into the valley, releasing the mine, and then climbing steeply whilst turning onto a north-easterly heading. The Sorpe Dam was attacked by two Lancasters, AJ-T, commanded by Flight Lieutenant Joe McCarthy, and AJ-F, commanded by Flight Sergeant Ken Brown.

The Sorpe Dam was neither breached nor severely damaged during the raid. Officially, the dam 'remained undamaged', but the blast had stripped the concrete wall on the water side 'to a depth of several metres', and about 60 metres of the dam's crown had been torn away.

Looking down at the village of Langscheid with its church the crews used as an aiming point, again I was amazed at the skill it would have needed to fly a Lancaster down into that valley, drop a large bomb, and then climb up and out the other side. No wonder it took them a few attempts to get it right.

After the Sorpe, I continued heading south-westerly to the Lister Dam which stands at the north-eastern end of a long narrow reservoir. The Lister is a curved masonry dam built between 1909-11 and was considered to be a secondary target in the plans for 'Chastise'. Research before the attack indicated that the dam was surmounted by two towers, whilst in reality there was only one. Like the Diemel, this fact would have made the possibility of a successful attack remote. In the event, only one aircraft was sent to attack it. This was flown by Pilot Officer Warner Ottley who was shot down on his way to the dam.

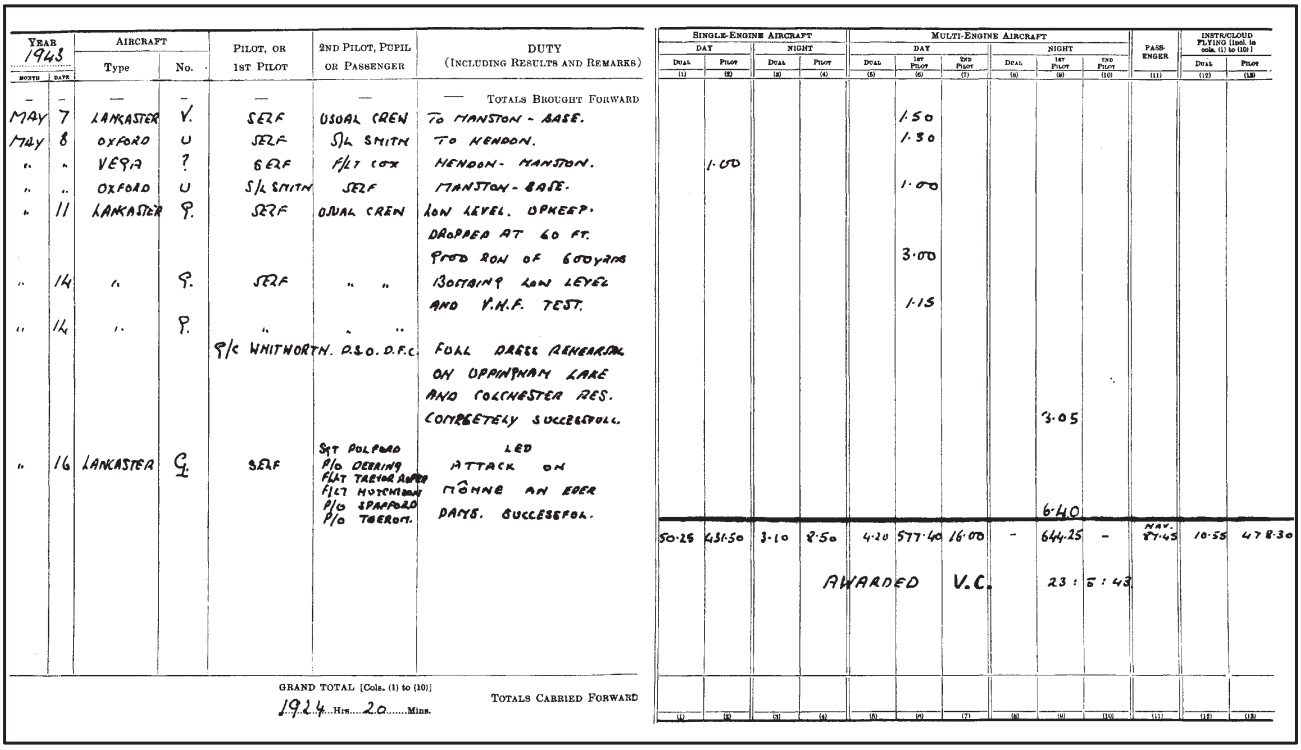
The Lister Dam from the south-east. The valley below the Lister must have been dammed since the war as the Listersee is now merely an arm of a much bigger reservoir called the Biggesee. The dam would probably have been attacked by heading almost due east (from left to right in the picture), using the hamlet of Eichen on the left of the second inlet to establish on the correct line, passing over the dam and turning left to climb over the higher ground to the north. Only one Lancaster was sent to attack the Lister, that being AJ-C, commanded by Pilot Officer Ottley. They never made it, being shot down near Hamm on their outward journey, six of the seven crew being killed.

The Ennepe Dam from the north-east. The probable line of attack would have been from up the left hand of the reservoir's two arms in the picture, using the small island as a reference for the correct line. Only one Lancaster was sent to attack the Ennepe Dam, AJ-O, commanded by Flight Sergeant Townsend. His was one of the last aircraft to leave Scampton, arriving in the area of the Ennepe at about 3.30 a.m. By then there was considerable mist forming in the area, such that he attacked the Bever Dam in error, thinking that it was the Ennepe.

After the Lister, I headed north-west to the Ennepe Dam which was constructed between 1902-05 as a curved masonry dam standing at the northern end of an L-shaped reservoir. Some of the official material relating to 'Chastise' references the 'Schwelme Dam' in place of the Ennepe Dam. There is no dam in the area known as the Schwelme, and therefore the immediate conclusion is that it is merely an error on the part of the report writers. However, after the operation, there was a degree of confusion about whether the Bever Dam was attacked in mistake in place of the Ennepe. As the rest of the reporting of the operation was so thorough, it could be argued that this was a 'deliberate mistake' on the part of the authors of the post-operation reports to conceal a genuine error on the part of the crews.

Only one aircraft attacked the Ennepe Dam as it was a secondary target in the plans for Operation 'Chastise'. This was Lancaster AJ-O, commanded by Flight Sergeant Bill Townsend. By the time he arrived in the locality, there was considerable mist drifting in the valleys, making location of the dam and

The Bever Dam from the north-west. It was not planned to attack the Bever Dam, though there is conclusive evidence that it was attacked in error by Lancaster AJ-O commanded by Flight Sergeant Townsend. This is from both the eyewitness reports at the time and fragments of the actual 'Upkeep' mine subsequently recovered by the Germans from the reservoir. In the misty conditions at the time, confusing the reservoirs would have been easy. There are four large reservoirs in the area, all of which must have looked very similar in the moonlight. AJ-O's probable line of attack would have been down the larger middle arm of the reservoir from left to right. Regrettably, the attack had no chance of success. Firstly the dam has no towers, so the bomb-aimer would have been unable to determine the correct range for releasing the 'Upkeep'. Secondly, the dam is of the earth type similar to the Sorpe rather than the gravity masonry type, and so the tactics were wrong as well.



Year 1943 Month	Date	Aircraft Type	Aircraft No.	Pilot, or 1st Pilot	2nd Pilot, Pupil or Passenger	Duty (Including Results and Remarks)	Single-Engine Day Dual (1)	Single-Engine Day Pilot (2)	Single-Engine Night Dual (3)	Single-Engine Night Pilot (4)	Multi-Engine Day Dual (5)	Multi-Engine Day 1st Pilot (6)	Multi-Engine Day 2nd Pilot (7)	Multi-Engine Night Dual (8)	Multi-Engine Night 1st Pilot (9)	Multi-Engine Night 2nd Pilot (10)	Pass-enger (11)	Instr/Cloud Flying Dual (12)	Instr/Cloud Flying Pilot (13)
–	–	—	–	—	—	— Totals Brought Forward													
May	7	Lancaster	V.	Self	Usual Crew	To Manston - Base.						1.50							
May	8	Oxford	U	Self	S/L Smith	To Hendon.						1.30							
"	"	Vega	?	Self	F/Lt Cox	Hendon - Manston.		1.00											
"	"	Oxford	U	S/L Smith	Self	Manston - Base.						1.00							
"	11	Lancaster	P.	Self	Usual Crew	Low level. Upkeep. Dropped at 60 ft. Prod run of 600 yards						3.00							
"	14	"	P.	Self	" "	Bofting? Low level and V.H.F. test.						1.15							
"	14	"	P.	"	" "										3.05				
				P/c Whitworth. D.S.O. D.F.C.		Full dress rehearsal on Oppingham Lake and Colchester Res. Completely successful.													
"	16	Lancaster	G.	Self	Sgt Pollard P/O Deering Flt Lt Taylor A.F.C. F/Lt Hutchison P/O Sprafford P/O Tigerot.	Led attack on Möhne and Eder dams. Successful.									6.40				
				Grand Total [Cols. (1) to (10)] 1924 Hrs. 20 Mins.		Totals Carried Forward	50.25	431.50	3.10	8.50	4.20	577.40	16.00	–	644.25	–	Nav. 87.45	10.55	478.30
												Awarded	V.C.		23 : 5 : 43				

Wing Commander Guy Gibson did the round trip in 6 hours 40 minutes and was awarded the Victoria Cross . . .

the subsequent attacking run very difficult. Later evidence established beyond doubt that Townsend did not attack the Ennepe Dam; that in fact, he attacked the Bever Dam, confusing it for the Ennepe.

My final objective was the Bever Dam. I could sympathise with Townsend as I circled over the Ennepe, as there were four large reservoirs in view at the same time. In broad daylight and no mist it was easy to determine which was the Ennepe and which was the Bever, but it must have been much more difficult for Townsend and his crew. The only point I could not reconcile was that whilst both reservoirs are orientated basically north-south, the dam is at the northern end of the Ennepestausee and the southern end of the Beverstausee. Surely they considered the fact that the direction of their final attack was 180 degrees different to that which they were expecting?

Climbing away from the Bever Dam, I had completed taking pictures of the dams and so headed for Düsseldorf for the second refuelling stop. The final stage was to return to England, to the airfield at Shoreham where I keep the Cherokee. To make life easy, I flew along the airway system using radio-navigation techniques. As such, all I had to do was guide the Cherokee along, which gave me the opportunity to reflect on what I had seen during the day, and to form some conclusions.

Many sources point to the short-term material effects of the operation, and conclude that the operation was a failure. From that perspective, one would have to agree. The material damage below the dams was repaired very quickly, the dams themselves being rebuilt before the autumn of 1943. The water supply was only affected marginally, as was the power supply. Damage to the transport infrastructure was probably more important, but even so, there were no lasting effects. The factor which surprised me is that reading between the lines of the files in the Public Record Office, all this was probably known even before the aircraft took off. Odd passages from some reports give a clue to the real thinking of the time. For example, from the Air Staff's report on the likely effects of breaching the dams, they say about the Eder: 'From the economic standpoint, therefore, this dam cannot be considered as a first-class objective' and 'The economic effects, however, are unlikely to be substantial'. (Public Record Office: AIR 8/1238)

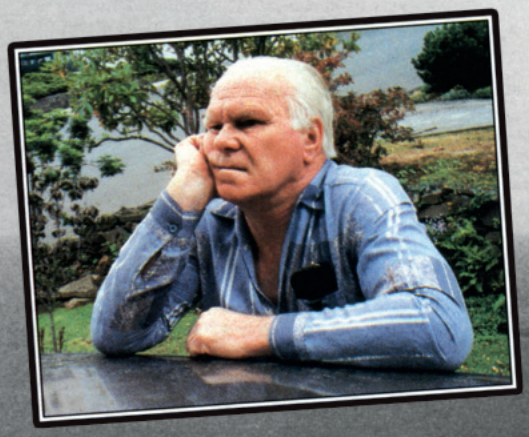
Study of the files makes it fairly clear that 'Chastise' was really a weapon in the morale war. It was intended to adversely impact German morale, to bolster morale at home and to vividly demonstrate to Britain's allies that the RAF was a force to be reckoned with. Taking that as the objective, there can be no doubt the operation was an unqualified success — the very fact it commands the attention it still does today is the proof of that.

The English Channel slid below the wing, followed by the home ground of first Kent and then Sussex. I landed at Shoreham after almost eight and a half hours flying during the day, tired but satisfied. There can be no doubt about one thing: the crews of 617 Squadron deserve to be remembered for executing what must have been a difficult operation particularly skilfully.

Mike McCormac flew his mission in 9 hours 15 minutes but he will have to wait until December 1993 to find out if he has achieved an accolade in Pooley's Dawn to Dusk International Flying Competition. An interesting link between the two log books is that Gibson used Southend — the starting point for Mike's outward journey — just two months after the raid for another practice sortie to drop the 'Upkeep' mine.

Date	Aircraft Type	Aircraft Registration	Captain	Holder's Operating Capacity	Journey or Nature of Flight From	To	Departure (G.M.T.)	Arrival (G.M.T.)	(1) Day Single-Engine In Command	(2) Day Single-Engine Dual or P.2	(3) Day Multi-Engine In Command	(4) Day Multi-Engine Dual or P.2	(5) Night Single-Engine In Command	(6) Night Single-Engine Dual or P.2	(7) Night Multi-Engine In Command	(8) Night Multi-Engine Dual or P.2	(9) Instrument Flying	(10) Simulated Instrument Flying	Remarks Including counter-signature for P.1/S
28.3.93	PA-28-140	G-BBID	SELF	P1	LE TOUQUET	LE TOUQUET	1355	1545	1:50										OUILLERS, THIERVAL, LEMAN FARM, HEBUTERNE, COMMEQUIES.
3.4.93	PA-28-140	G-BBID	SELF	P1	SHOREHAM	HALFPENNY GREEN	1035	1200	1:25										CPT.
10.4.93	PA-28-140	G-BBID	SELF	P1	SHOREHAM	SHOREHAM	1210	1245	0:35										2 × TOUCH/GO
10.4.93	PA-28-140	G-BBID	SELF	P1	SHOREHAM	DENHAM	1545	1640	0:55										MID, WOD
12.4.93	PA-28-140	G-BBID	SELF	P1	SHOREHAM	MANSTON	1215	1340	1:25										DOVER CASTLE, WALMER CASTLE, DEAL CASTLE, RICHBOROUGH CASTLE
25.4.93	PA-28-140	G-BBID	SELF	P1	SHOREHAM	SHOREHAM	1340	1435	0:55										EASTBOURNE, LEWES
25.4.93	PA-28-140	G-BBID	SELF	P1	SOUTHAMPTON	SHOREHAM	1755	1855	1:00										BOTLEY
2.5.93	PA-28-140	G-BBID	SELF	P1	SHOREHAM	COVENTRY	1535	1715	1:40										CPT.
3.5.93	PA-28-140	G-BBID	SELF	P1	SHOREHAM	WELSHPOOL	1040	1320	2:40										CPT, LUDLOW CASTLE, STOKESAY CASTLE, CLUN CASTLE, LAKE VYRNWY, LLYN CELYN, BRENIG RESERVOIR
15.5.93	PA-28-140	G-BBID	SELF	P1	SHOREHAM	SOUTHEND	1210	1305	0:55										MAY, DET.
22.5.93	PA-28-140	G-BBID	SELF	P1	SOUTHEND	PADERBORN LIPPSTADT	0625	1005	3:40										DARE, ENG, VOR, COA, SIGN O'W/C ROOSENSTIEL, BEER, REES, ANSEN, AHLEN
22.5.93	PA-28-140	G-BBID	SELF	P1	PADERBORN LIPPSTADT	DUSSELDORF	1125	1335	2:10										DIEMEL DAM, EDER DAM, HENNE DAM, MOHNE DAM, SORPE DAM, LISTER DAM, ENNEPE DAM, BEVER DAM
22.5.93	PA-28-140	G-BBID	SELF	P1	DUSSELDORF	SHOREHAM	1450	1815	3:25										NEVILO, NIK, KOE, ING, LYD
28.5.93	PA-28-140	G-BBID	SELF	P1	SHOREHAM	SHOREHAM	1710	1810	1:00										NEWHAVEN, HORSTED KEYNES.
Grand Total, excluding Passenger Flying ..... 409 hours ..... 25 minutes									320 50	71 55			12 10	4 30			36 10		Hrs. Totals Carried Forward Mins.

THEN



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